SEXY NEW LOOK!...FREE CD!...SEXY NEW LOOK!... FREE CD!...S

MEAN MACHINES SEGA

FIRST FOR SATURN

AMOK
GRANDIA
MYSTARIA 2
MIGHTY HITS
TOMB RAIDER
STREET RACER
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3
COMMAND AND CONQUER

DAYTONA REVIEWED

IT'S CHAMPI[illegible]

CHRISTMAS [illegible]GHTS

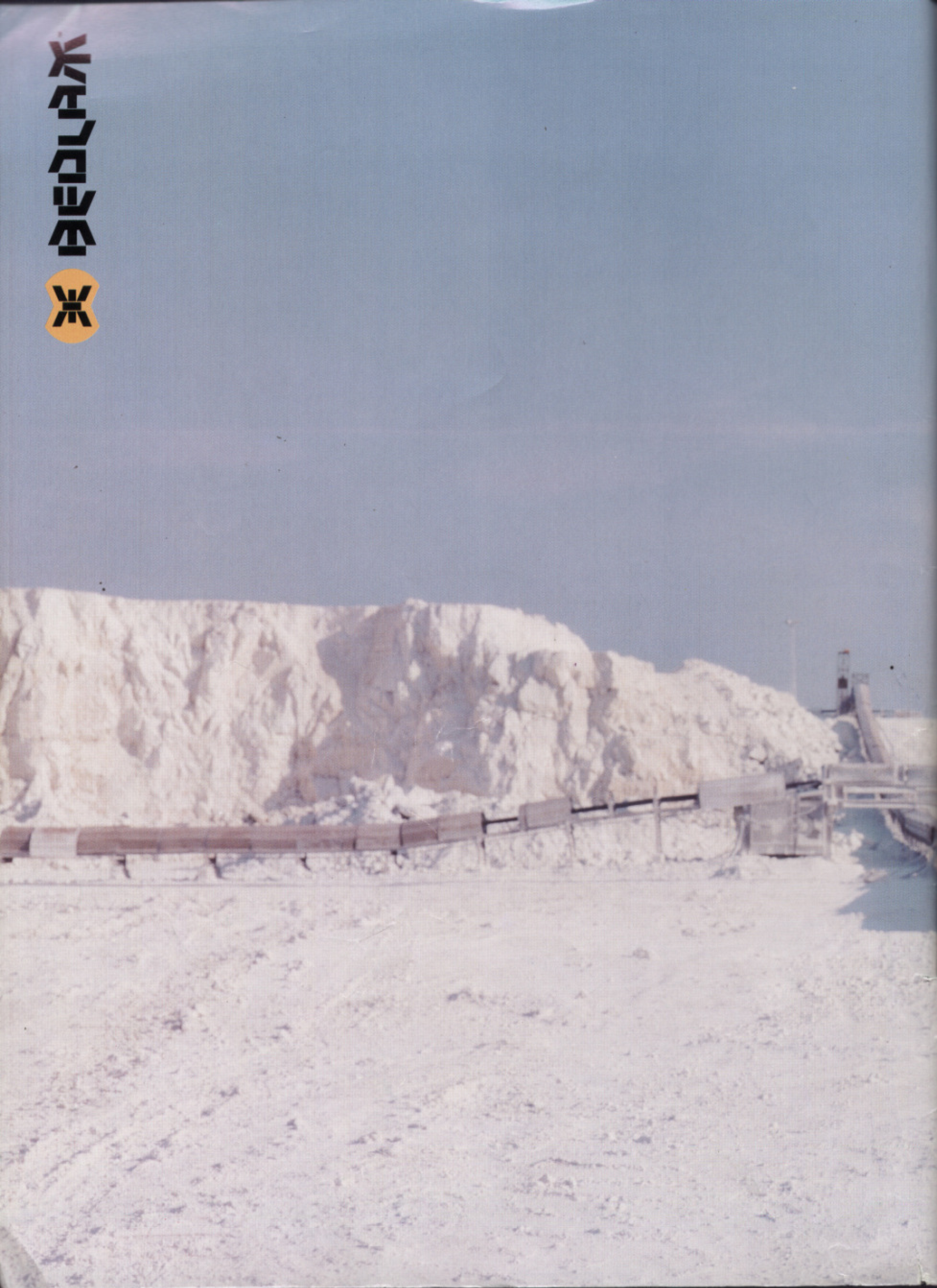
EXCLUSIVE NEWS INSIDE!

mean16 PULLOUT SECTION: THOR AND 'VIPERS GUIDES

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GT Interactive Software (Europe) Ltd
MIRAGE
PlayStation
SEGA SATURN
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CONTENTS

Welcome one and welcome all, to the new look MEAN MACHINES. Scary, isn't it? After a good six years of a faithful format we thought it was time for a change. You should find you can now read the mag without your eyeballs bleeding: there's more info and less waffle on more of the games you want to read about.

HIGHLIGHTS



This is the 330th time I've cropped up in Mean Machines!

PREVIEWS SECTION 82

MEAN 16

INTERACTIVE PULLOUT

A brand new section dedicated to game help and reader interaction. A no-nonsense Tips section and detailed guides to the most popular games of the moment. A new letters page format, a Directory of the finest Saturn releases and the best Q&A pages in the business. Anything else in MEAN 16 is up to you. Get thinking.

REGULARS

REVIEWS



Now why is my skirt so long? It's because of the size of my schlong.



MEAN MACHINES SEGA

In time everything must change. We're no exception.



You are now holding a reborn **MEAN MACHINES**, and I hope you enjoy it. It's the end product of several months of hard thinking and hard graft, not, I'll be honest, without its problems, but at the end of it all something everyone on the team is quite proud of. This is also a fitting juncture to introduce two new members of the editorial team. Matt Yeo has a background in game journalism almost as illustrious as my own, and we cynical old hacks love to get together and discuss the good old days. Hopefully, better days for Sega are around the corner once again, as the quality of Saturn software steadily improves and people see through the hype of that blasted PlayStation. Sega have made it clear they plan to supply the gamers' appetite for excellent arcade conversions and RPGs, an area Sony appear to have no great interest in. This month's exclusive Daytona review shows how far they have come in a year. Please drop me a line with your thoughts on what is rather a radical new look. How **MEAN MACHINES** develops is largely up to you. Don't touch that dial!

Gus

FANTASTIC FOUR

The people that make this magazine the way it is. Now you know who to blame. This month; what they watch on a Sunday morning:

GUS SWAN



I like studying the back of my eyelids until Sunday afternoon, but if I do wake up, I tune in to the disturbing Sunday Show on BBC, especially now that Katie Puckrik has got the boot.

FAVE GAMES:Worlwide Soccer '97; Tomb Raider

MATT YEO



Being a Channel 4 type, I watch the Waltons, as part of my Domestic American lifestyles module for my Open University degree. The practical part of the exam involves making Mom's Apple Pie.

FAVE GAMES:Street Fighter Zero 2; Daytona CCE

STE FULLJAMES



Shooting Stars is my choice viewing, being the sort of mad Vic and Bob-Ulrika lusting-Loaded reading lad I am. Secretly, though, I love to flick over and catch some politics on On the Record as George Dawes is doing the scores.

FAVE GAMES:Tomb Raider; VF3

NICK PATERSON



I'm a bit lazy on Sunday mornings, so usually I watch the sun go down and get out of bed very late. Sometimes I do get to see Sunday tely, but that's when I get in late on a Saturday night, 'cos I'm crazy like that.

FAVE GAMES:Tomb Raider; Sega Rally (still..?)

MANAGING EDITOR
Steve 'stevely' Merrett
EDITOR
Angus 'QC' Swan
DEPUTY EDITOR
Matt 'convert' Yeo
DESIGNER
Nick 'wee willie winkie' Paterson
STAFF WRITER
Stephen 'Otaku' Fulljames

CONTRIBUTORS
Tom Cox
Radion Automatic
Helen Danbey
Rob Bright
Edderick Lomas

PUBLISHER
Andy McVittie
GROUP AD MANAGER
Lisa Merrett
AD MANAGER
Chris Perera
MARKETING MANAGER
Alex Gorman
MARKETING EXECUTIVE
Claire Matthews
PRODUCT MANAGER
Kirstin Ritchens

GROUP PRODUCTION MANAGER
Tina Gynn
TYPESETTING/ AD DESIGN
Ryan Boundy

Special thanks to: Dorian Bloch at Chart-Track, Susan Gaulter and Yaz for Jap translation, a two-fingered salute (from Steve) to Thameslink for never running on time, Nick Malaperiman for the EA footie bash and, as always, Mark at Sega.

EDITORIAL OFFICE:EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU
TELEPHONE: 0171-972 6700
EDITORIAL FAX: 0171-972 6701
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NEWS

Here is the news. We've scoured the four corners of the globe this issue to bring MEAN MACHINES readers the very latest Sega information as it breaks. Read it and weep!

FREE CEE DEE!





You may have noticed by now that we're the business when it comes to giving away free stuff. Who can forget that huge packet of Monster Munch a couple of years ago?

But we've decided that tasty wheat based snacks just aren't enough, free gift-wise. So that's why you've probably already found the exclusive Saturn demo CD on the front of this issue. Besides looking really cool on the cover, it lets you play snippets of the top Saturn releases of the moment, for free!



BUT HOW DOES IT WORK?

It really is all perfectly straightforward. Simply load the disc according to your Saturn's operating instructions and switch on your machine. Once the disc has loaded, you'll see a menu screen where you can pick which title you want to play and read instructions on how to play it. Are we great to you or what?

It really is all perfectly straightforward. Simply load the disc according to your Saturn's operating instructions and switch on your machine. Once the disc has loaded, you'll see a menu screen where you can pick which title you want to play and read instructions on how to play it. Are we great to you or what?

In the unlikely event that you have a defective disc, call Kirstin Ritchens on 0171 972 6700 for more assistance. Oh, and please don't pester the MEAN MACHINES team with tricky technical questions 'cos we're not too bright.



And despair not, Megadrive owning readers. If none of your friends has a Saturn, you can always use the disc as a stylish silver coffee coaster.

ALIEN TRILOGY

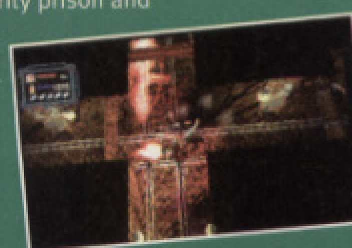
It's like Doom, but with big scary aliens in. In this demo you have five minutes to waste as many of the xenomorph critters as you can find. You also have mission objectives to accomplish and the rendered intro from the full game is included. Weapons available in this demo include a 9mm automatic and a nice meaty shotgun.

Alien Trilogy received 91% when it was reviewed in MEAN MACHINES.



LOADED

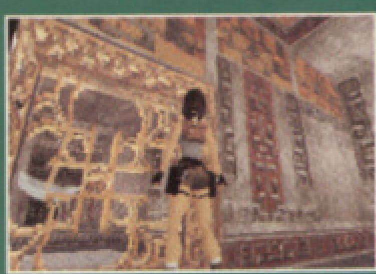
It's another excuse for gratuitous ultra-violence with Gremlin's Loaded. Your task in this five minute demo is, apart from wasting all and sundry with a multitude of weaponry, to find the lift that will enable your escape. The plot to the full game involves breaking out of a high security prison and then going after the unpleasant character who sent you there in the first place. And why not. Loaded also got 94% (notice a pattern emerging here?), because it's top.



TOMB RAIDER

Explore lost civilisations and nick their prized artifacts with bad gal explorer Lara Croft. In this rolling demo, you'll see our heroine battling wild animals and going for a swim. Yum.

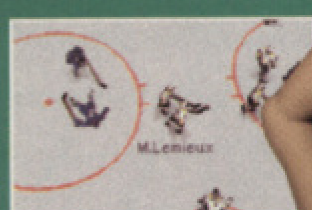
Check out the review in this issue to see what we really think of Core's Tomb Raider.



NHL Powerplay '96

More violence here, but in a kind of legal sort of fashion. Yes, it's ice hockey, America's excuse for a good ruck. Not much of a plot, but in this demo you can play one period of an exhibition match but try not to start any fights, okay?

MEAN MACHINES awarded NHL Powerplay '96 not inconsiderable 86%.



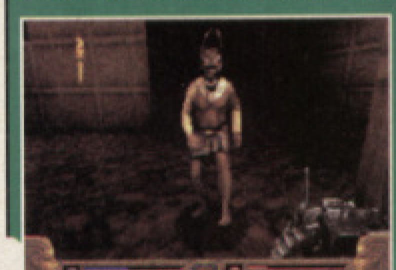


Fancy fooling around with this little lady? Well why not give the Tomb Raider demo a whirl?

EXHUMED

n Exhumed you play a hardened operative sent to 'sort out' a load of aliens who've invaded Egypt and are trying to harness the power of Rameses II for their own nefarious ends. But it is the CIA or MI6 that hired you? No, it's the spirit of Rameses himself. Zoinks! The rolling demo features exciting footage from this first person shoot-'em-up.

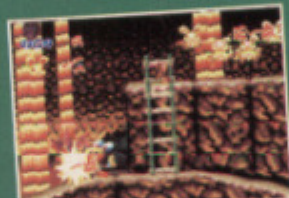
We gave Exhumed a whopping 94% when we reviewed it. It's great.



Keio Flying Squadron 2

Keio Flying Squadron gives you all the best in Japanese silliness; the full, and slightly twisted, cartoon intro and a whole kerr-azy level from the game that features psychotic raccoons, walking statues and a girl in a bunny costume. Keep taking that medicine you crazymad-bonkers Japanese programmers!

When we reviewed Keio in issue 48, we decided to give it 75%. Because we're like that.



Christmas NiGHTS



Yuji Naka has one more surprise for Saturn owners this year. Christmas NiGHTS is a unique idea, Sega's 'Christmas present' to new and existing Saturn owners. The disc will feature a redesigned version of the Claris' Spring Valley course, spectacularly dressed up as a winter wonderland, with falling snow, fir trees and loops decked with boughs of holly.

Beyond that there is new music, and an ingenious system of secrets found by 'opening your presents' after you play, including a link attack mode on another of the original NiGHTS levels. MEAN MACHINES knows what some of these twenty-odd modes do, but is sworn to secrecy by Sega for the time being. We wouldn't want to ruin the surprise anyway, but suffice to say, many are a dream come true for NiGHTS fanatics.

Christmas NiGHTS has been designed to build up to the Christmas season by revealing more of itself throughout the advent period. What you get at the beginning of the month is not what you see at the end. How will you get this fantastic concept? Sega have not finalised plans for distribution, but Christmas NiGHTS will be a promotion in December, available when you buy a Saturn through leading retailers, or when you buy any of the following games; NiGHTS, Worldwide Soccer '97, Fighting Vipers, Daytona USA CCE, Virtua Cop 2. The exact details will be known next month, when we gear up for the festive season with a feature on Christmas NiGHTS.





Christmas NiGHTS. available late November '96. Sega promotion.

Mighty Hits



After the dismal Chaos Control this month, Virtua Gun owners might think Virtua Cop 1&2 are their only options. But Sega are stepping in with Mighty Hits next month, a wholly different selection of gun-based mini-games. Mighty Hits is unbelievably cute, in the same vein as Puzzle and Action we featured in news some months back. The sub-games vary from bouncing balls into toy trains, to shooting balloons to guide an airborne man onto a raft, adding an element of strategy that goes beyond a steady aim. There are 20 odd challenges in the package, for one or two players, and some gorgeous rendering. An intriguing review next month.

Mighty Hits. Official UK Saturn release December. RRP £29.99. Compatible with Virtua Gun. Developer Sega





:OFFICE CHART

We play loads of games every month but here's the top five titles the Mean Machines Sega team really rates:



1 (1) NIGHTS (Sega)

2 (-) TOMB RAIDER (Core)

3 (-) FIGHTING VIPERS (Sega)

4 (2) STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 (Capcom)

5 (4) VIRTUAL ON (Sega)

DDD

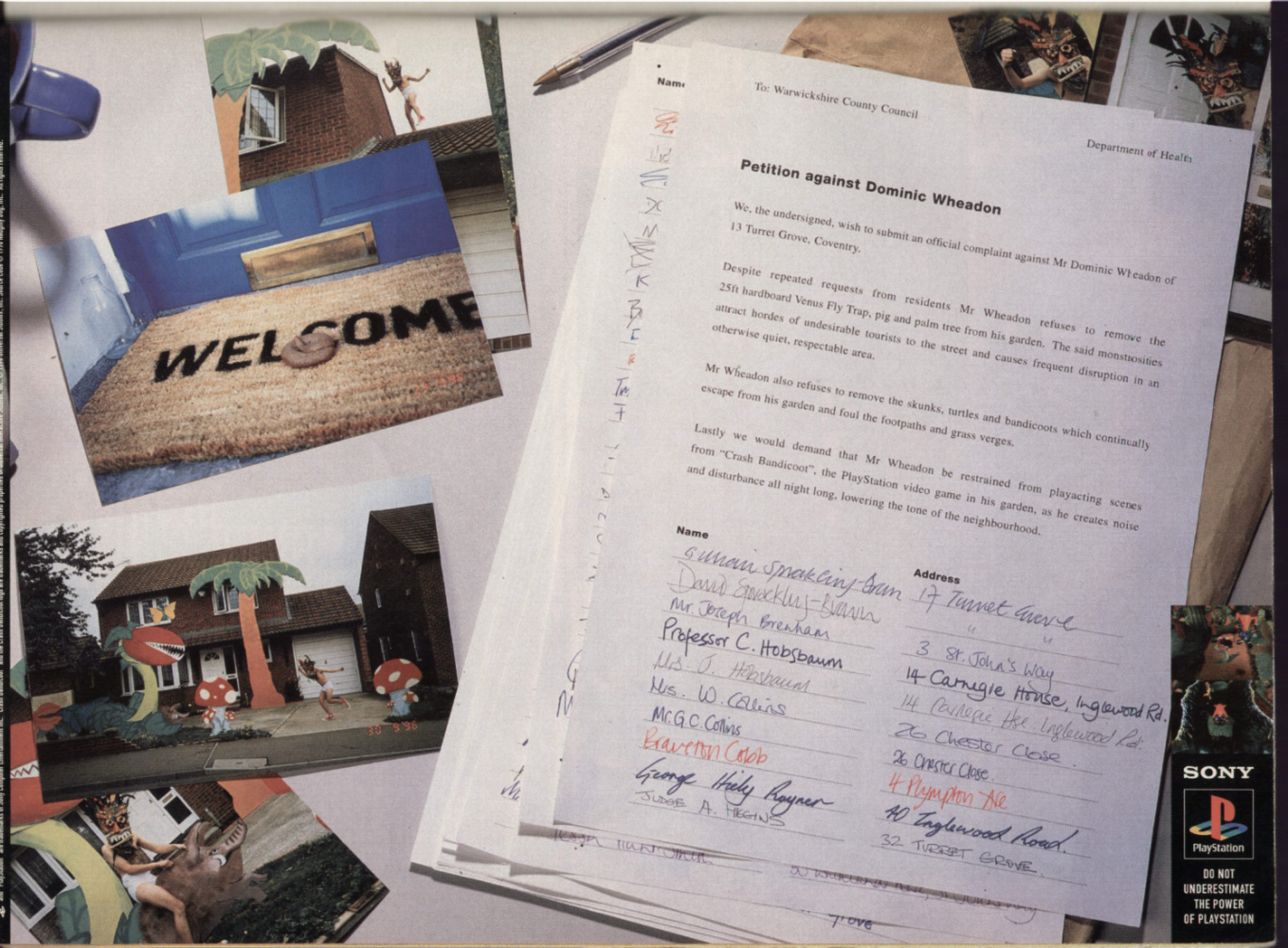




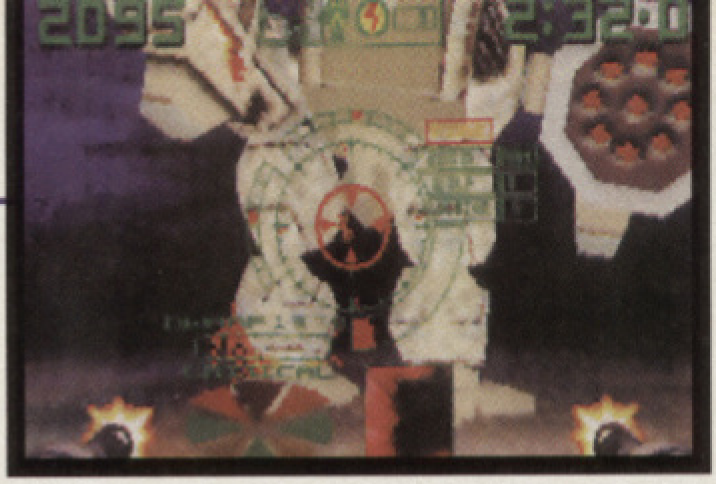
DDD is a new Japanese rendered adventure that probably brings Warp's D to mind. Funnily enough, there is no connection between Warp and this new game as, you may probably be aware, Warp are working exclusively on the four-disc Enemy Zero for release in Japan this December. However Takara's DDD takes a distinct nod in the same direction, being one of these lavish suspense adventures with gruesome renders and limited interaction. Whether DDD will attract a European publisher is unclear (Sega have recently handled Takara products) but the import version of the game will probably be fairly playable.

DDD. Japanese import release Q1 1997. RRP Import. Developer Takara

What are you reading this for? Check out the free CD!


WELCOME
To: Warwickshire County Council
Department of Health
Petition against Dominic Wheadon
We, the undersigned, wish to submit an official complaint against Mr Dominic Wheadon of 13 Turret Grove, Coventry.
Despite repeated requests from residents Mr Wheadon refuses to remove the 25ft hardboard Venus Fly Trap, pig and palm tree from his garden. The said monstrosities attract hordes of undesirable tourists to the street and causes frequent disruption in an otherwise quiet, respectable area.
Mr Wheadon also refuses to remove the skunks, turtles and bandicoots which continually escape from his garden and foul the footpaths and grass verges.
Lastly we would demand that Mr Wheadon be restrained from playacting scenes from "Crash Bandicoot", the PlayStation video game in his garden, as he creates noise and disturbance all night long, lowering the tone of the neighbourhood.
Name
Address
Mr. Joseph Brenham
Professor C. Hobsbaum
Mrs. W. Collins
Mr. G.C. Collins
Braverton Cobb
George Hicky Rayner
JUDGE A. HIGGINS
17 Turret Grove
3 St. John's Way
14 Carnegie House, Inglewood Rd.
26 Chester Close.
26 Chester Close.
4 Plympton Ave
40 Inglewood Road.
32 TURRET GROVE
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

Krazy Ivan



After the success of both Wipeout and Destruction Derby on Saturn, it was inevitable that Psygnosis would continue to convert its most popular PlayStation titles to Sega's 32 bit marvel. Next up for an imminent release is the explosive mechanoid shoot-'em-up, Krazy Ivan. Set in a variety of global hotspots, players take control of a towering metallic battlesuit and must attempt to stop an invading alien horde. The Saturn version is said to be a variation on the basic PlayStation engine with the possibility of new missions and enemies. Guns, violence and cheesy FMV come as standard. There's actually some confusion over who will actually be handling the distribution of Krazy Ivan though as both developer Psygnosis and Sega themselves are said to be in the running.

Krazy Ivan. Official UK Saturn release early '97. Developer Psygnosis

Ogre Battle



If you're a fan of RPGs you'll no doubt be frothing at the mouth to learn that Ogre Battle is on its way to Saturn. Japanese software giants, Enix, have been responsible for a handful of quality SNES RPGs in the past (including the legendary Dragon Quest series) and have now turned their attention to producing a quality next generation questing experience. Ogre Battle features plenty of turn-based combat, spectacular magical spells and an epic storyline guaranteed to keep all you dungeons and dragons types occupied for ages. There's no word on a PAL version being released just yet but with the Saturn being a safe haven for RPGs, expect more news over the next few months.



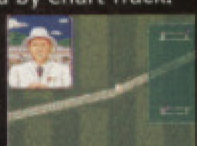


Ogre battle. Japanese import release Q1 1997. Developer Enix.

SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE

The top five best selling Megadrive games this month as compiled by Chart Track.





1 (1) BRIAN LARA CRICKET '96 (Codemasters)

2 (2) MICRO MACHINES 2 (Codemasters)

3 (3) WORMS (Ocean/Team 17)

4 (4) FIFA SOCCER '96 (Electronic Arts)

5 (5) SONIC AND KNUCKLES (Sega)

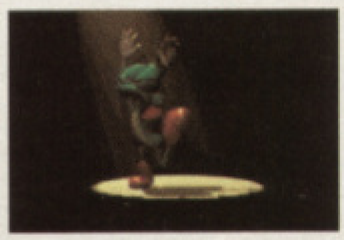
Club SATURN

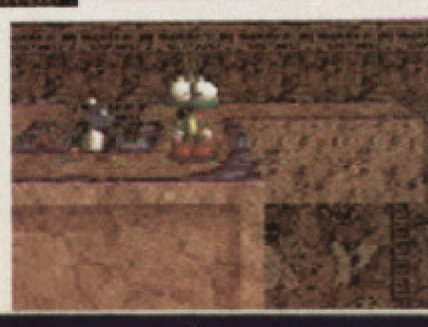
In a bid to steal some of the PlayStation's trendy, clubbing audience, Sega have teamed-up with cool dance label, Suburban Base Records, to release an exclusive compilation of classic remixed game music. Included on the disc are such familiar 'choons' as the themes from NiGHTS, Daytona USA, Virtua Fighter and Fighting Vipers plus 11 other massive hits. If you're into that crazy drum 'n' bass type thang you may recognise such remix masters as Duderella, D'Cruze and Marshell Jefferson. Saturn owners also receive an added bonus as playable demos of Worldwide Soccer '97, Baku Baku, Panzer Dragoon II, NiGHTS and Athlete Kings are included on the disc. The Club Saturn CD will be on sale at the end of the month and should be available from cooler record shops up and down the country.



Bug TOO







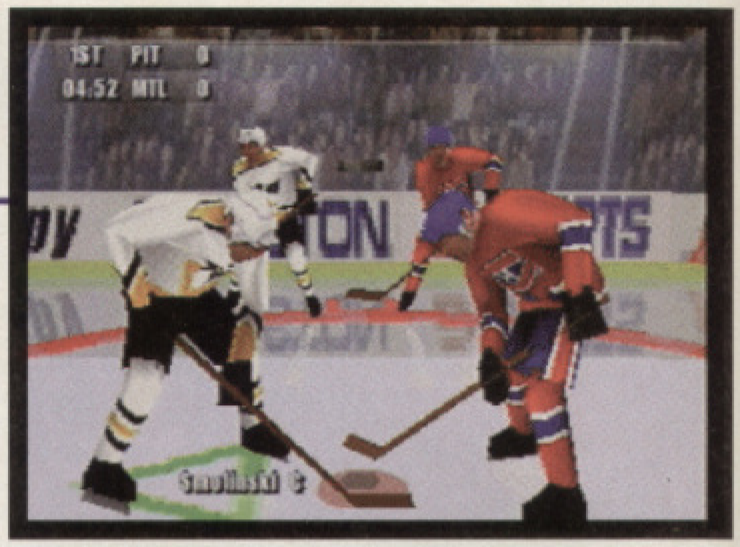
Sega's very own insectoid hero makes a welcome return to the 3D platforming world that spawned him. Bug Too is being finished as you read this and Sega are hoping that the final product will more than surpass its well-received predecessor. Saturn owners can expect 50 levels (Bug had just 18), secrets galore and plenty of tongue-in-cheek humour. We'll have a full Bug Too preview next month.

Bug Too! Release Q1'97. Developed by Segasoft

Get down to the sound of the Sega Saturn underground.

NHL '97





If ice hockey is your kind of sport then get your skates on 'cos EA are about to unleash NHL '97 on Saturn. Going head-to-head with Virgin's own NHL Powerplay, EA's offering features updated team stats, motion-captured player animation and the kind of bone-crunching, puck-smashing excitement we've come to expect from this sport. MEAN MACHINES will bring you a full NHL '97 preview next month so hold onto your stick until then.

Nhl '97 Saturn. December. EA

SEGA Pinball

The recent Associated Leisure Preview (see Arcadia page 82) featured more than just the usual glut of high-tech arcade machines. Also on display at the show were a handful of Sega branded pinball tables due for release over the next couple of months. First up is Independence Day, based on the multi-million dollar mega-blockbuster movie. With alien fighter craft, hidden bonuses and actual digitised speech from the likes of Jeff Goldblum and Will Smith, this is one pinball machine to keep an eye out for.

Next up is Batman Forever featuring the Val Kilmer version of the Caped Crusader and his new mate in tights, Robin. Players race against the clock to stop the nefarious plans of Two-Face and The Riddler and the table features amazing artwork, cool models of the Batwing and Batcave and even a multi-player mode!

Finally, Sega are releasing a Goldeneye pinball machine this month. Following the incredible success of the movie, with Pierce Brosnan inheriting the 007 mantle, Bond fever is at an all-time high. The pinball machine features many of the film's climactic moments including super-secret satellite dish that captures your balls! To coincide with the release of the game, MEAN MACHINES is offering you a chance to win a copy of Goldeneye on video. Recently released on sell-thru, the film features all manner of daredevil stunts as well as the usual winning Bond formula or girls, guns and gadgets. Thanks to our top mates at MGM/UA Home Video, we've got ten copies of Goldeneye up for grabs and all you pesky kids have to do to win one is answer this ever-so easy question:

What does James Bond have a licence to do?

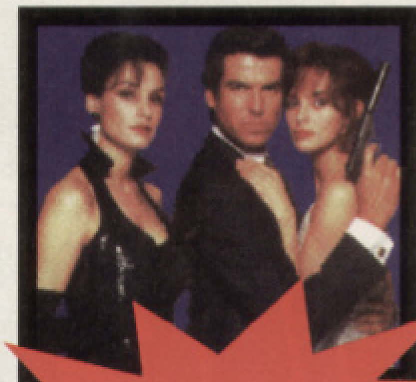
A. To own a colour portable TV.
B. To kill.
C. To own a dog/cat.

Put your answer on a postcard or on the back of a sealed-down envelope and send into the usual editorial address. Double agents need not apply!







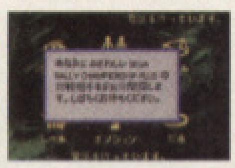


COMPETITION

Sega pinball tables. In arcades soon. Developer Sega Pinball, Inc.

X-Band online





With the release of the Saturn modem in Japan, an online service called X-Band has been set up to allow players to compete over the Internet. Specially adapted versions of popular two player games have been released to coincide with this service, the most recent title is Sega Rally Championship Plus. On top of this, you can use X-Band to send and receive e-mail.

To use X-Band you need, as well as a modem, a pre-paid 'media card' which allows access to the network. The standard card costs ¥2000 (around £12.50) and contains 100 units. The card is only used to initially set up the connection; after it has been established, you just pay for the phone call.

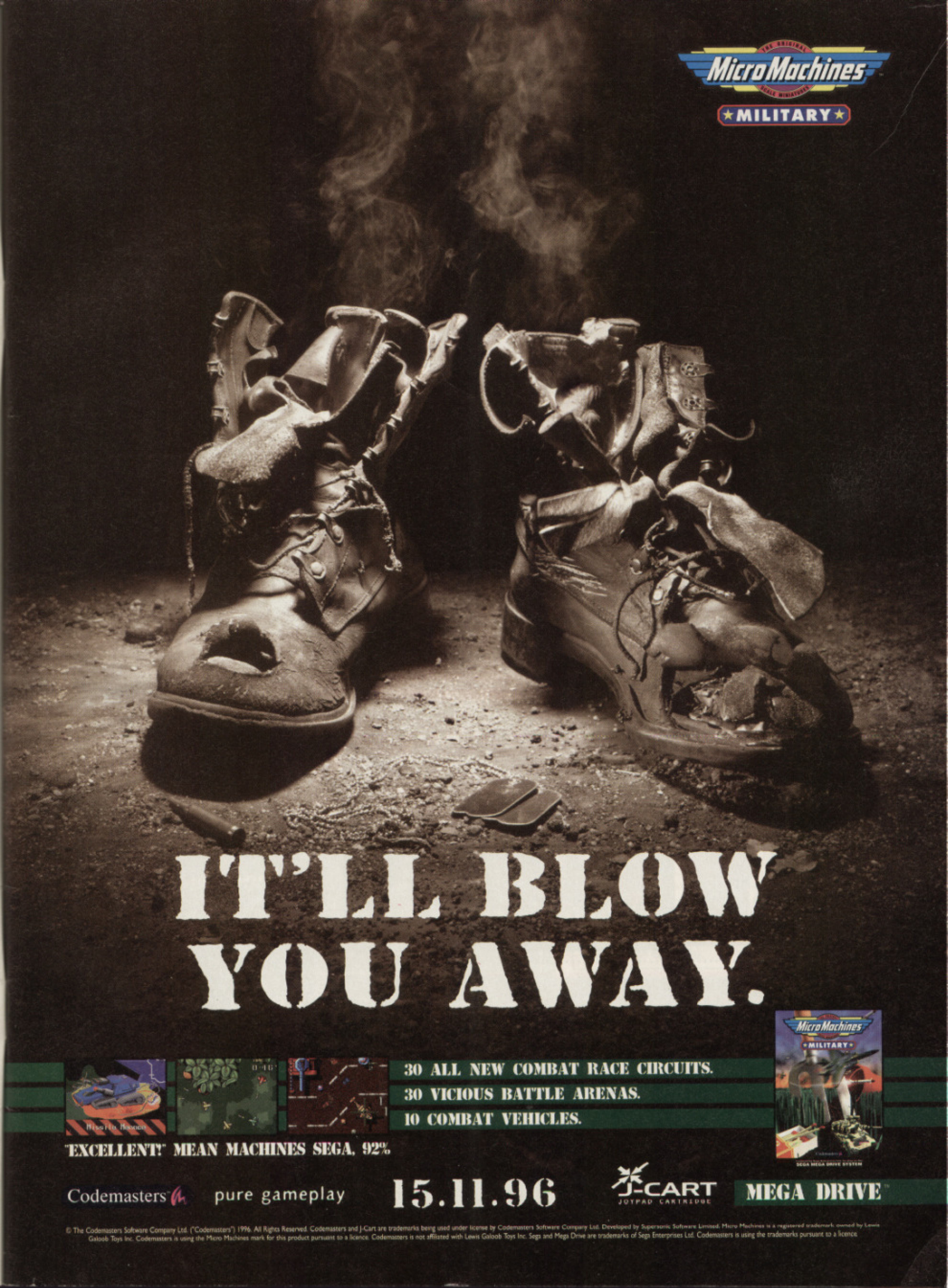
This service offers the opportunity for two player action for people who live in remote areas or who don't have any Saturn owning friends. The only drawback is that after an intense onlineRally session, you could end up with a hefty phone bill!



SALES CHART: SATURN

The top ten best selling Saturn games this month as compiled by Chart Track:

1 (1) NIGHTS (Sega)
2 (3) DESTRUCTION DERBY (Psygnosis)
3 (2) ALIEN TRILOGY (Acclaim)
4 (4) ATHLETE KINGS (Sega)
5 (-) EXHUMED (Sega)
6 (7) SEGA RALLY (Sega)
7 (5) BUST-A-MOVE 2 (Acclaim)
8 (8) VIRTUA COP (Sega)
9 (9) LOADED (Gremlin)
10 (6) DISCWORLD (Psygnosis)


Micro Machines
MILITARY
IT'LL BLOW YOU AWAY.
30 ALL NEW COMBAT RACE CIRCUITS.
30 VICIOUS BATTLE ARENAS.
10 COMBAT VEHICLES.
"EXCELLENT!" MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 92%
Codemasters
pure gameplay
15.11.96
J-CART
JOTPAD CARTRIDGE
MEGA DRIVE
SEGA MEGA DRIVE SYSTEM
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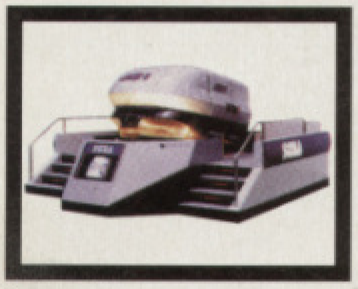
SEGAWORLD CHART

The top five coin-guzzlers at Sega's premiere amusement centre this month are:

1 (-) DAYTONA USA
2 (-) SEGA RALLY
3 (-) GUNBLADE N.Y.
4 (-) VIRTUA COP 2
5 (-) VIRTUAL ON



FREE for ALL!





As you probably know, Segaworld opened its massive chrome-plated doors early last month and has since been packed to bursting point with gamers of all ages. We've had a few phone calls from irate readers this month though complaining about the long queues and high entry fee. We have to agree that £12 seems to be an awful lot of money to pay for a few mediocre VR rides and a handful of quality coin-ops but there is some good news. Apparently Sega have put all their arcade machines on free play for a limited period. So if you fancy a blast at the likes of Manx TT, Touring Car and Virtua Fighter 3 and don't want carry a pocketful of loose change then get down to Segaworld while this nifty offer is still running.

Kizuna Encounter

Can't get enough of naff beat-'em-ups? Worry no more 'cos good old SNK are back in fine form once again with the recent release of a new arcade bruiser, Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle. Taking its cues from the likes of King of Fighters '95, KE features tag team fights and multi-player mayhem. Other features include Super Finishing moves, high speed 'Rush' attacks, multi-hit combos and at least ten playable characters. Kizuna Encounter: Super Tag Battle should be Saturn bound sometime in '97 so keep reading these pages for updates.





JAPANESE CHART

Wanna know what's hot and what's not in the land of the rising sun? Our Japanese Chart gives you the lowdown on the top selling Saturn games in Japan:



1 (-) LADY RED (Red)
2 (-) STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 (Capcom)
3 (-) GUNDAM (DID)
4 (-) SNATCHER (Konami)
5 (-) ROMANCE 3 KINGDOMS IV (Keoi)

GOSSIP SHORTS

Now in its new 'diet' format, Gossip Shorts scans the world for tidbits and scandal...

AMERICAN BOOB

:Sega America are twisting their knickers over Fighting Viper Candy's (Honey) bare bosom. One of the renders that rewards the player who completes the game has a picture of the ample 16-year old in a faintly suggestive pose. The controversy has been fuelled by stores unwilling to stock the title, perhaps causing a delay in the US release. This is after all the other dubious stuff, like school uniforms were stripped from the US game (but not the UK version, huzzah). Hands off our games, er... Brussels.

AMALGAMATION

Recently, nine of Japan's smaller software houses banded together to form 'GDNET'; Games Designers Network, a network which will give them more clout amongst the big publishers. Significant names abound, including; Treasure and Game Arts, with the lesser known Sting, Baroque (who produced some of Enix's top SNES titles), Quintet, JAM, Never Land, CRI and Bits Laboratory. The group seems heavily orientated towards RPGs.

POWER OF THE PRESS

Our congratulations to Nick, PR Executive at JVC, who picked up an award from the snooty 'Face' magazine for worst press release of the month, for his Sea Bass Fishing directive. It was probably the quote from Sea Bass fan, 'our Marcus' that led to its shaming.

HOT CAKE SYNDROME

Our sister magazine, Sega Saturn Magazine, experienced a sell out of its recent demo disc issue after phenomenal demand. MEAN MACHINES anticipated a similar high demand and produced discs for every one of this month's UK issues. That's forward planning for ya!

TORICO CANNED

The Japanese rendered adventure, Torico, featured in a previous news item, will not be released here after all. As Sega America have passed on the project, Sega Europe have decided not to translate the speech heavy game on their own.

A POSH MUSICIAN WRITES

Warp's big project, Enemy Zero has enlisted the talents of Michael Nyman, a respected composer of film and chamber music whose CV includes the oscar-winning 'The Piano' and Peter Greenaway's movies (obscure and rather filthy-minded British film-making bloke).

MICRO CRASHES

Uncharacteristically, Codemasters have fallen behind schedule with their Micro Machines V3 game on Saturn (damn). The much-awaited project has also slid on PlayStation to a launch with the Sega version sometime in the new year (snigger).

READERS CHART



Compiled with the help of our loyal readers we need YOUR vote for this chart so fill in the coupon below and you might win a nifty prize!

1 (1) **SEGA RALLY** (Sega)

2 (-) **NIGHTS** (Sega)

3 (-) **DAYTONA USA** (Sega)

4 (2) **VIRTUA FIGHTER 2** (Sega)

5 (-) **FIFA '96** (Electronic Arts)

The *Ultimate* II

Although known for their extensive back catalogue of 2D beat-'em-ups, SNK have also released a few rather smart sports games in their time including the legendary Super Sidekicks. Keen to expand upon their existing line-up, SNK have just debuted The Ultimate 11, a silky smooth footie coin-op that takes players on a whistlestop tour world tour where they get the chance to play against the best teams on the planet. Unusually, for a soccer game, The Ultimate 11 offers gameplay hints and tips during a match, informing players when an ideal shot has been lined-up or if there's an opening in the opposition's defence. Hopefully SNK will produce a Saturn version soon to compliment the likes of Fatal Fury: Real Bout and King of Fighters '95.



HELPING HAND

Rage Software are toiling hard to bring the Saturn version of Doom up to scratch, after early versions with low frame rates and detail. Rumour has it someone from GT took up a copy of Exhumed to Liverpool for them.

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN LONDON

The founder of Atari, and by virtue of it, home video games, Nolan Bushnell, was in London recently at a conference for Developers, aptly called Develop '96. Nolan's speech on new forms of digital entertainment for the next century headlined the event.

NEW ADS

Sega's two new Saturn ads will be Daytona USA CCE and Virtua Cop 2, to air in November and December. A special Christmas NiGHTS ad may be added to this schedule.

HISTORY LESSON

he last 30 years worth of video gaming culture will be on display at the Museum of the Moving Image from 29 November 1996 to 15 May 1997. The exhibition, entitled Re-Play, offers visitors a chance to play both old and new video games as well as discover some of the history behind the world of electronic entertainment. For more information, contact MOMI direct on 0171 401 2636.

20 GOTO 10

Some wag is producing 'Basic for Saturn' in Japan, to take advantage of the new keyboard peripheral. Looks like a return to the days of programming the Spectrum in WH Smith's to print your name down the side of the screen. Huzzah!

OY, MEAN MACHINES! WADDYA THINK OF MY CHART THEN?

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

....

....

....

I'M GAGGING TO GET MY MITTS ON:

....

I RECKON THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

....

NAME: ....

ADDRESS: ....

....

Send to: Readers Chart, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

OUT NOW

A selection of the most interesting software now within your grasp.



ACTUA GOLF
GREMLIN

Continuing the high quality 'Actua' series, Gremlin's latest release is a fantastically competitive game with a standard of realism and attention to detail that's brought this UK software house plenty of acclaim.

OVERALL 92

BLAM! MACHINEHEAD
CORE



Modifying the gameplay engine that powered Thunderhawk and Shellshock was a smart move by Core Design. Set in a bizarre apocalyptic wasteland this futuristic shoot-'em-up combines smooth 3D polygon visuals with trigger-pumpin' action.

OVERALL 89

WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97
SEGA



The finest footie game so far arrives in a blaze of glory and, surprisingly, it's from Sega themselves! Graphically outstanding and featuring perfect playability, Worldwide Soccer '97 is a sporting fans dream come true.

OVERALL 93

THREE DIRTY DWARVES
SEGA



A strange little title best described as Streets of Rage meets Monty Python. If scrolling 2D beat-'em-ups are your cup of tea then Three Dirty Dwarves offers cute animation and plenty of humorous scrapping.

OVERALL 66

FIGHTING VIPERS
SEGA



Just when you though Sega couldn't possibly top themselves, along comes an amazing 3D beat-'em-up to topple even the mighty Virtua Fighter 2! With cool characters, hidden fighters and tons of secrets FV is a must buy.

OVERALL 95

Don't forget to fill in the Readers Chart coupon!

It's so good, baby when you're at the wheel/ I can't believe the way I feel, it's such a rush just being with you/ we're driving in the rush hour.

review

Game Name	DAYTONA USA CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT EDITION				
Publisher	SEGA				
Release	NOVEMBER	Price	£49.99		
Game Style	DRIVING				
Import?	X	Linkplay?	X	Players	1-2
Control	Joypad/anlogue/wheel				
Background	An enhanced version of AM2 arcade racer's, 1995 release.				

Not, as you may be thinking, William Shakespeare, but Jane Weidlin from her one-hit wonder.

The poetic embodiment of Daytona USA, the greatest arcade racing game yet devised. AM2 are the masters of racing games — they were making Outrun and Power Drift coin-ops when the Wipeout programmers were still getting hot milk in their breakfast cornflakes. It has been a matter of pride and honour for Yu Sukuki's men, sorry persons, to return to the Saturn version of Daytona, add new features and rectify faults that were caused principally by the demand to have the original game ready for an April 1st launch last year. Their work has produced Daytona USA Champion Circuit Edition. A title, granted, that doesn't trip of the lips but does it, more importantly, tickle the palate?











DAYTONA U
CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT ED

OLD GLORY

Assuming that you know nothing of this game, Saturn acolytes, this is the essence of Daytona. It was released in 1994, the first AM2 coin-op to use the newer Model 2 board, which offered full texture-mapping and more polygons than the CG Model 1 board used for Virtua Racing, 18 months previously. Daytona broke away from the Formula formula, with turbo-charged saloons for vehicles, an Indy-style 'bowl' track and two sprawling urban circuits.





777 SPEEDWAY

Daytona's 'easy' track, the place to get acquainted with the handling and powersliding, as it features only two major bends. But highly-skilled drivers come back to it for two reasons. First, you have the incredible opposition of 39 other cars, creating a packed field and a claustrophobic Indy feel that no other racing games has ever created. Secondly, 777 Speedway is the perfect setting for chasing record times, as you push the car to maximum speeds for almost the entire circuit, attempting to shave hundredths of seconds off recorded times.

DINOSAUR CANYON

Deemed 'medium' difficulty, but many think Dinosaur Canyon is the most difficult of the three to master, as braking on its huge curves is a cop-out to 'powersliding', the high-risk, Starsky and Hutch-style technique that allows you to go into a controlled skid, taking corners at the highest possible speed. The circuit is excellently balanced, with a glorious pedal to the metal opening straight leading into a tunnel section, while the second half of the circuit has you tussling amongst thirty cars for advantage on two massive bends.







SEASIDE STREET GALAXY

The original Daytona's advanced track, with few opportunities for outright acceleration. Seaside requires control and discipline and a faultless knowledge of the layout is the only way you're going to get within the fastest times. Seaside also has the most memorable scenery in Daytona, a space shuttle on the launch pad, a majestic sailing ship in dock, a towering bridge modelled on New York's Brooklyn bridge, and a wide scenic boulevard descending from hill to sea.



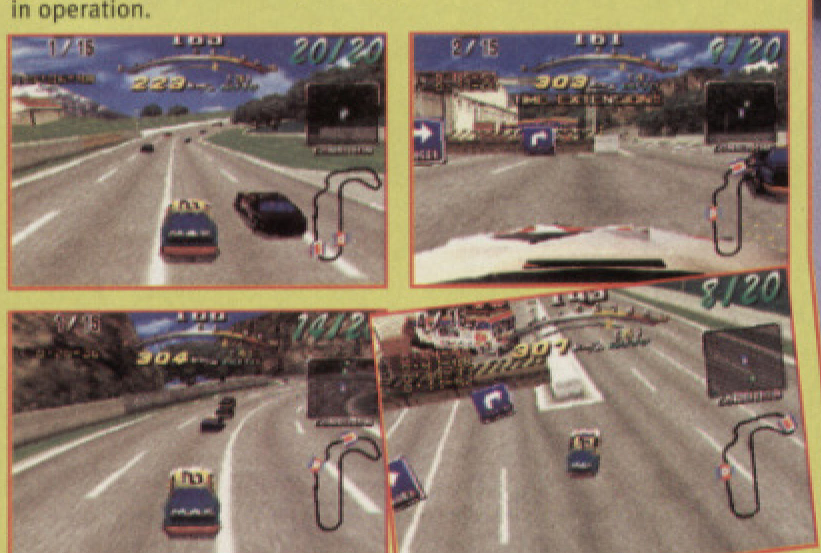


NEW DAYTONA NEW DANGER

The Championship Circuit Edition has two new tracks, extensions of the Daytona ideal, but perhaps designed to be more suited to the Saturn's processing limitations.

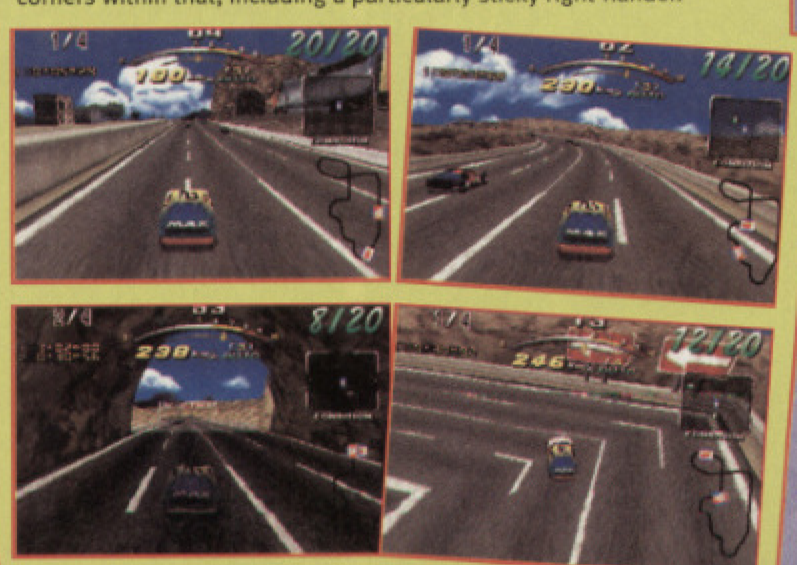
NATIONAL PARK SPEEDWAY

This sits neatly between the outright simplicity of 777 Speedway and the trickiness of Dinosaur Canyon. It's quite a bit bigger than the Indy track, but with fewer bends and wider lanes, allowing more flat-out racing. The visual accompaniement is a roadside theme park with rotating Ferris Wheel and gleaming rollercoaster — Watch out for that in operation.



DESERT CITY

Being frank, this track was not quite complete in our review version. The layout is all there, but elements of detail are not all added. What is present, however, is a stunning freight train, which follows a track the runs along, then intersects the road via a series of tunnels. The circuit is about the length of Dinosaur canyon, but packs more troublesome corners within that, including a particularly sticky right-hander.



NOW IT TAKES TWO

The most lamented facet of Daytona, 1995-style was the lack of a two-player competitive option. After all, the coin-op allows up to eight players to interact, via the Championship eight-seater cabinet. A lot of earlier speculation was banking on this new Daytona using the linkplay cable, but Sega have yet to get fully behind that concept. Instead, we have a split-screen option. Strangely, this seems to be faster, if anything, than the one-player mode, although the races are 'duels' with no other cars on track. The payoff is scenery clipping which is significantly more noticeable than solo mode. It's still great fun though. The two-player mode also offers the options for handicapping one player and the booster which makes the second-placed car go faster.



















THE CLIPPING ISSUE

Daytona USA provoked many comments about 'clipping' a graphic technique that is supposed to hide objects out of view to aid the processor and maintain game speed. Daytona's 'clipping' was less than satisfactory in parts, a fact Sega became well aware of, and they made it a priority for the update. Their success is clearly visible in certain key cases that raised the most comments. First of these is the Sonic Wall section of 777 Speedway. This awesome roadside rock carving used to be spoiled by appearing in ugly chunks only when the car was close. Now it appears in full much further back. The same goes for the rock overhang on Dinosaur Canyon, the shuttle and most impressively, the sailing ship on Seaside Street. But in other areas the improvements have not been able to eliminate scenery 'popping up' completely, which may continue to disappoint some, but they should accept the fact the phenomenon is part of 32-bit performance on all gaming formats and not limited to Daytona.

comment



GUS

There's no mystery in the fact of Daytona being Sega's most successful all-rounder ever, it's a classic game. All the best elements of other racing games, but different enough to be unlike any other racer. What other 32-bit game packs 40 cars into your field of vision with the level of speed and detail here? With the CCE edition improvements it looks like Sega have listened to their critics: the two-player mode is there, the options are more comprehensive, the sound (both music and FX) are much improved and the clipping. Yes, it's better. Not perfect, mind, but not aggravating as before, and not bringing down the overall quality of the game. Except that is, on the split-screen option. The tinkering on details, new animations like seagulls and the blessed moving reflections on the car windows are welcome and dispel the slight feeling of shoddiness that accompanied old Daytona. A year on from the original, Daytona CCE has stiffer opposition from better quality third-party racers, but it comes out of the pits and the magic is still there.

comment



MATT

Think about what could have better in the original version of Daytona. The clipping was ugly, the music was cheesy, there were only three courses and there was no two player mode. Now imagine a version of Daytona where all this has been sorted out and you've got CCE. Admittedly the clipping is still not perfect, but it's a darn sight better than in the original game. The music and FX have been improved too, although the commentator's voice started to grate pretty quickly. Add to this smart new presentation, two all new tracks AND a split screen two player mode and you get what Saturn Daytona should have been all along. If you haven't got the original then a) why not? and b) get this. If you have and you're a serious racing nut, CCE is still worth the cash.



GHOST BUSTING

The hugely popular Ghost Mode, imported from Sega Rally, improves the Time Attack mode no end. With it, your previous Time Attack best competes with you in phantom form, and lap and checkpoint splits let you monitor your time performance throughout the race.

STAR CARS

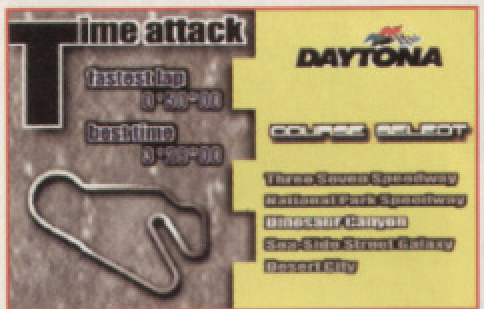
A new approach has been taken to the car choice in this version. The Hornet and Gallop cars remain as the standard vehicle, but a group of eight other cars are selectable from the beginning, each now with the benefit of a name, and a star-driven rating system for grip, acceleration and max speed.



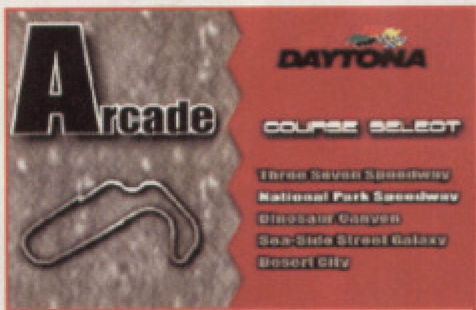
TAKING SOUNDINGS

Another gripe with Daytona as was, was the lousy music. King of Speed, the electro-pop accompaniement to 777 Speedway was acceptable, but the deranged J-Pop warblings of 'Sky High' and 'Let's go away' were frankly not. Music has been composed on two continents for Daytona CCE in a bid to atone for this shame. Three of them, we're happy to say come from Sega Europe in Chiswick; attempting to educate the wider population in Drum and Bass (what? — the entire USA) with Race to the Bass, funking up the fairground track and remixing King of Speed to have a more techno edge. Sadly, the Miller Lite-and-Baywatch tendency based in California insist on having a couple of their own sad-rock café renditions in there, with a AOR Daytona title track sung by some bloke from Mr Big (who? — the respectable music buyers of Britain). Who needs Firestarter, eh?





Dinosaur Canyon in Time Attack livery, with the records for best performance on show.



The layout of the new National Park Speedway in arcade mode. The long and short chicanes are clearly visible.



PLAY IT AGAIN

A little matter, we know, but now there are proper race replays on offer, with a selection of camera angles.



scores

GRAPHICS The improvements are not that hard to find — better colouring and texturing overall, and a serious stab has been made at sorting out the problems of scenery clipping where it matters most. Still a stunner, visually. **92**

SOUND The old pap has been cast aside, though the King of Speed remix is a sort of perverse highlight, and better than the Drum and Bass track. The commentary is a little to repetitive, though, constantly telling us to go easy on those tyres. **89**

PLAYABILITY The new tracks are pretty good, but not quite as clever as the old ones. Daytona is a unique driving game, far more subtle than Ridge Racer, yet more robust and violent. A racer for risk-taking Escort drivers. **94**

LASTABILITY Lessened if you have the original, but a vast army of new Daytona fans will be striving relentlessly to break the 777 sound barrier. The new modes, including a passable split-screen game, aid the longevity too. **92**

overall

A smartened up Daytona which makes it easier to appreciate its huge strengths not spoiled by niggling little weaknesses. **93**

FIRST LOOK

Mean Machines is going its own way with a new section that brings you detailed information on games that are worth it. This month VF3 and Grandia.

first look

Game Name	Virtua Fighter 3
Publisher	Sega
Developer	AM2
Release	arcade now; Saturn '97

At last! Virtua Fighter 3 is at the arcades! This means the Saturn version will be on its way soon enough. Before you start dribbling deliriously at the prospect, take a look at the all-new interactive backgrounds and the two new faces entering the fray.



Arcades are starting to fill out with loads of Virtua Fighter fans, eager to get to grips with Virtua Fighter 3, the latest in Model 3 technology. It's not only the improvements to the VF2 characters that's putting coins in slots, but the chance to try out two all-new characters in this third VF instalment. This isn't the only flash new thing about VF3 either. The backgrounds have been improved to make them more interactive, what with variations in the height of fighting platforms and the new escape button to counter what were previously unstoppable combos. So what are we waiting for? Let's go see if we can start a fight!











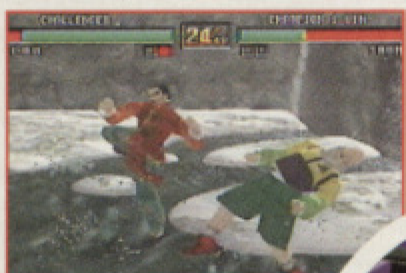






VIRTUA FIGHTER 3











FILLING OUT THE BACKGROUND

VF3 is unlike any other fighting game with respect to the backgrounds. Rather than confining characters to a ring, the stages give a sense of freedom. Admittedly, this is illusionary because the fighting arena is restricted to an extent – you won't see the fighters moving all across town brawling for example – but the stages are now more interactive with things like raised platforms and uneven fighting surfaces, all of which necessitate adjustments in your fighting strategy. Here's a look at them:



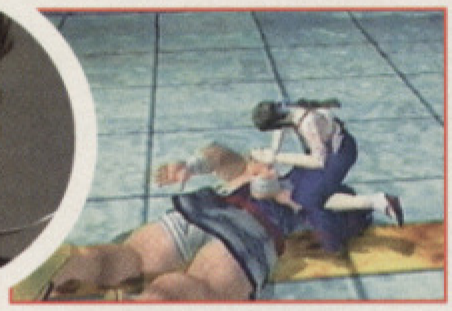


The exciting apex of arcade fighting game technology.















SARAH STAGE: Subway Station

Taking in the seedier side of life, Sarah's stage is set in a disused subway station. Nevertheless, a subway train can still be observed speeding by behind the characters. Just whether it's possible to get run over by it remains a mystery. There are also steps leading to an exit which the players can use to their advantage, but that can mean jumping over an opponent or getting a more comfortable kick to the chops. Among the background details worthy of note are decaying billboard adverts and tattered posters.



WHAT'S NEW?: After all that brainwashing, Sarah's been recovering remarkably well. So well in fact that she's got more kicks and and punch-kick moves at her disposal. She's also a great character to use the Escape button with.

TRY: F-P-DF-P
B-K+G
D-P+K-K
B-P+G (throw)

AKIRA STAGE: Japanese fortress



The most fascinating thing about Akira's stage is the raised platforms in the shape of stairs and sunken platforms to form a lower part of the fortress. Detail is evident in the corroding stone walls gathering moss and the weeds popping up between the slabs. If you walk over them they shift their position. More impressive though is the way in which, when disturbed by the fighting, leaves float into the air only to begin a slow descent towards the ground again.

WHAT'S NEW?: Akira remains mainly the same in appearance as he did in VF2. However, his evasive strategies are now enhanced by the use of the new escape button. Another new feature is Akira's ability to use his Power Uppercut as part of a combo.

TRY:
BF-P+K+E
DF-K+G
DF-P+K
B-F-P+K

LION STAGE: The Playground

You'd be forgiven for confusing Lion's stage with Shun's Chinatown stage, such is their similarity. The important difference here lies in the metal fence which circles the playground, and is about as close to Fighting Vipers as VF3 gets in terms of backgrounds.

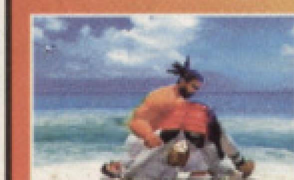


The fighting surface is concrete so you can expect plenty of chaffing. When the fence begins to obscure the fighting it is discreetly faded out. Further in the background are some innocuous buildings and still further away lies more indistinct scenery.

WHAT'S NEW?: The Frenchman with attitude returns with more than a little Gaelic flair. He's faster than he was in VF2, as well as being a touch stronger. Lion has also been given some new throws including jumping on an opponent and using their neck as a springboard!

TRY:
DF-P+G (throw)
F-P+G (throw)
F-F-K-K
B-P-P-K

JEFFRY STAGE: Caribbean Island



This is more like it – sun, sea and white sand. The downside is that you can't pull up a deckchair and relax. That would make the game Virtua Slacker rather than Fighter. What's really impressive about Jeffry's stage is the extent to which the whole environment feels alive. The sea froths against the tiny island the fighters are placed on, the sun's rays sparkle off the undulating waves, and, in the drama of combat, sand is kicked up and carried on the breeze. The fighters aren't restricted to the sand island either. If one of them gets knocked down they might end up falling into the water with a splash.

WHAT'S NEW?: Jeffry hasn't really changed a great deal since VF2. Maybe he's spent too long relaxing on his Caribbean island. Fortunately, the Escape button now means he's more capable of dealing with characters who use a lot of combo attacks.

TRY:
F-B-P+G (throw)
D-P+G (throw)
K-K-P / F-B-P

WOLF STAGE: Underground Cavern



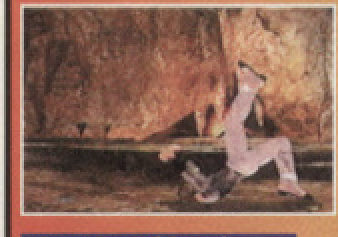
As is appropriate for a man with a name like Wolf, his stage is an underground cavern (rather than appearing on Gladiators or something). The only light on this stage comes from a fire burning in the distance. This makes for some amazing shadow plays on the wall as the fighters silhouettes do battle as well. There are stalactites and stalagmites in the distance, and the fighting surface is uneven. The overall atmosphere is one of claustrophobia, the fighters huddled within the flickering light.

WHAT'S NEW?: Wolf remains one of the strongest characters in the game, although he's still not much with combo's. Fortunately for him, the Escape button makes it easier to deal with those who can perform impressive combo's. Still a brilliant thrower.

TRY: F-P+G (throw)
F-F-P+G (throw)
UF-P
F-P+K

KAGE STAGE: The Desert

The Kage stage might look at first glance like it is quite simple, what with it being set in a barren desert. However, the attention to detail can clearly be seen in the way the sand spirals into the air and vanishes into the distance. This is taken further with footprints left in the sand as the players shuffle about, and body marks left when they hit the deck. There's no ring-out stage as far as we can tell which means you might bump into Lawrence of Arabia as you go a-travelling and a-rucking.



WHAT'S NEW?: Being the vain type, Kage actually comes with two outfits in VF3 – his traditional blue ninja suit and a more casual, dinner party look. As for his moves, he performs some of the most spectacular throws in the game.

TRY: F-P+G (throw)
UF-P+G (throw)
D-P+K
UF-K+G

LAU STAGE: The Library

There's nothing the Virtua Fighters like more than settling down with a good book after busting a few limbs. This is especially true of Lau whose stage is set in a library. The opening to a fight sees the camera zooming across a great hall until it's fixed on the characters. The main fighting area is a raised dial in the centre of the library although you can fight outside this area. The whole stage is decorated with lush velvet and gold to give it a truly grandiose appeal.

WHAT'S NEW?: After losing to Akira in the second VF tournament, Lau is out for revenge. His combos are now more impressive than ever, and he has begun to master a new floating attack. He's likely to suffer from the inclusion of the new Escape button though.



TRY: B-DB-D-DF-F-K+G
F-P+G (throw)
DF-P+K
B-B-P-K+G

SHUN STAGE: Chinatown



His judgment being a bit impaired by the quantity of booze he puts away, Shun's stage sees him swaying carelessly on the slanted wooden roof of a shop. You can fathom this by the variety of Chinese signs dotted about the place, and also from the houses and streets which reveal themselves as the camera pans around. The curved roof might make you think that falling off is more than likely, but an iron bar fence saves the fighters from injury – other than what they inflict on each other of course.

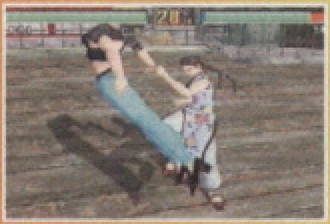
WHAT'S NEW?: Good ole' Shun was never one to turn down a drink, but now he's refined his alcoholic fighting technique, and as a result has greater control. He's also developed more versatility in terms of combos and has a few more throws.

TRY: DF-P+G (throw)
F-K+E
K-K-D-P
K-K-P

PAI STAGE: Chinese Wall

Ok, who out there knows what the only man-made object visible from outer space is? The title of this stage should give it away really – it's the Great Wall of China. Pai's stage does everything to capture just how impressive a sight this is with the Great Wall stretching out into the distance. You can move up and down the steps of the wall to gain a tactical advantage over your opponent. There are also walls which you can trap an opponent against before giving them a sound pummelling.

WHAT'S NEW?: Pai is still the fastest of all the fighters in the game, and this, coupled with her combo attacks, make her more than a match for anyone. Her combo abilities have actually been improved, and when this is used in conjunction with the Escape button she's deadly.



TRY: DF-P+G (throw)
F-F-P+K
DF-P-P-F-P
D-K-K







THE NEW CHARACTERS

Having established the kind of backgrounds and improvements to the established fighters, it's time to concentrate on the two new additions to the Virtua Fighter fold, and take a look at both their stages and fighting styles.

AOI UMENOKOJI: Snowing Waterfall

BASIC MOVES:
F-F-P+K
B-B-P+K
P-P-P / DF-P
DF-P+K
F-K-K / P-P-K
D-K+G
P-P-P-D-K
P-P-P-K
THROWS:
DB-P+G
D-F-P+G
P+G / D-P+G

One of the two new characters, Aoi, has an especially picturesque stage featuring both snow and a waterfall, all shrouded in a light mist. The surface is uneven due to erosion from the mountain stream, affecting the grip and stability of the fighters. The attention to detail is exemplified by the snowflakes which are rendered in painstaking 3D. As you moving towards the fighters the closer snowflakes enlarge. Draw away from the fighters and the snow becomes an indistinct mist. The waterfall flows convincingly as well, the water splashing and rippling away downstream. Quite divine.

FIGHTING STYLE: In keeping with the idyllic setting Aoi resides in, her fighting style is based primarily on repelling attacks rather than initiating them. To do this she uses a variation on aikido, a martial art based on defence. Having said this, her fighting style is more aggressive. She has excellent combination potential coupled with a range of floating attacks. But her greatest skill is the ability to counter every and any attack by simply using P+K button combinations and directing the joystick to where the opponent is approaching from. This will lay her opponent on the deck and leave her free to follow up with a few extra blows. Add to this the fact that she's very fast and there's definitely a potential champion in the making.



TAKA ARASHI: Sumo Shrine

BASIC MOVES:
F-F-P-P
DF-P+K
F-F-P / P+K
DF-DF-P
DF-P+K
B-P+K
DB-P+K
D-B-F-P
D-P+K
THROWS:
F-F-P+G
P+G / F-P+G
DF-P+G

As you could probably guess for yourself, the new character Arashi fights in a sumo ring. But rather than display his techniques in front of thousands of fans, he fights in the cerebral atmosphere of a Japanese shrine situated at the top of a cliff with various paths leading to and away from it. The sense of space such an environment induces should be balanced against the confined fighting arena. Having said this, look out for the relatively shallow drop to a lower ledge on the side furthest from the shrine.

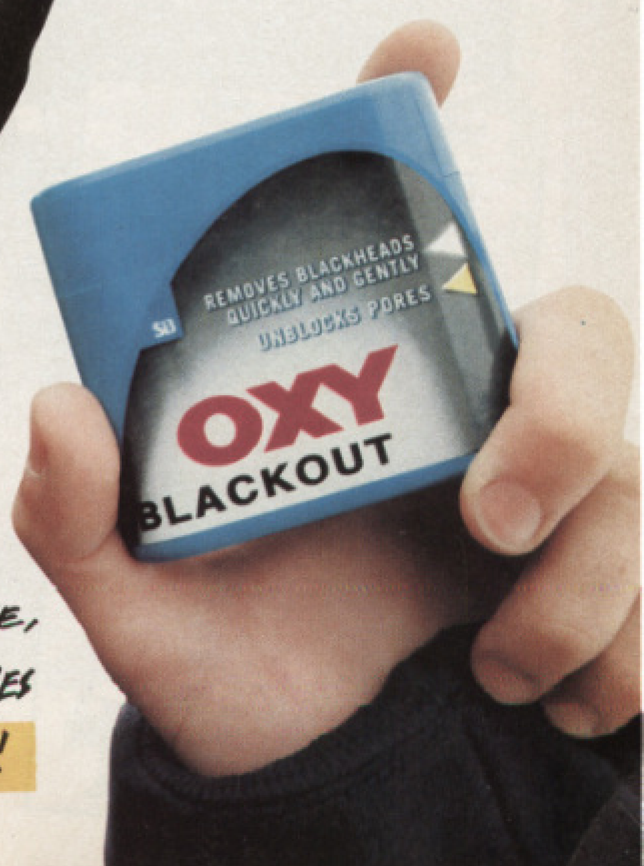


FIGHTING STYLE: There are no prizes for guessing what kind of fighting style Taka Arashi is likely to employ. I mean, it's hardly going to involve butterfly attacks, or rapid ballet combo's. Nope. Sumo is Arashi's speciality, and it means his size is his best advantage, and he physically dominates any arena he stands in. Like a sumo wrestler, he is at his best when he has an opponent in his grip, using his weight and muscles to overpower them. Obviously his size means he is slow so when using him you'll want to keep an opponent close. Just how effective he is as a fighter, only time will tell.



THE BLACKHEADS

OUT NOW ON TAPE.



IF YOU'RE SERIOUSLY INTO BLACKHEADS, AND YOU'D RATHER NOT BE, CHECK OUT NEW OXY BLACKOUT. IT HAS SPECIAL STICKY TAPES THAT LIFT OUT BLACKHEADS GENTLY. BLACKHEADS? OXYCUTE 'EM!

First look

Game Name	Grandia
Publisher	Game Arts
Developer	Game Arts
Release	Mid 1997

GRANDIA



No-one can lecture Game Arts about polygons. Softcos working across the world on 32-bit projects are employing polygon technology and becoming confident with it, but Game Arts can put their work into perspective, having started fiddling around with 3D computer geometry ten years back! They even worked against the odds and brought true polygon action to the Mega CD with the amazing Silpheed. Although the gameplay of that title was limited, the visual achievement was stunning.

They were at it again earlier this year with GunGriffon — polygons employed for a 3D robot battler. But it's Grandia, their latest project, that has grabbed the attention of the Japanese press. This title promises to be an epic RPG in the style of Square's Final Fantasy or Sega's Phantasy Star series. But Grandia is set apart from them all by using polygons throughout. The player benefits from having an amazingly detailed 3D world, where every minor object can be manipulated. The player characters are animated from sprites, but the game can interact both sprites and polygon objects perfectly. Much of the last two years has gone into creating the bizarre world of Grandia, which seems beyond even the imagination of previous outlandish Japanese RPGs. The finest CG artists and programmers have been drafted onto this project that will most certainly be converted for British systems. The two CD game set should be available on import in early '97.



It's Grandia by the seaside. This level will probably involve you fighting giant Whelks armed only with some spells and a large bottle of Sarsons.

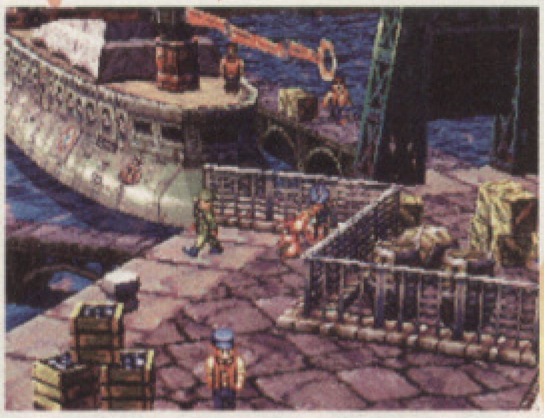
THE SPEAKING STONE

The land of Enjuul is undergoing an Industrial revolution. Its capital and main port, Paam, is thriving and bustling with the new steam inventions, and colonists leave daily to explore the new continents. Amidst this society is Justin, a dreaming lad who looks back to the ancient days of Enjuul's civilisation and spends hours in the ruins that surround Paam. He lives with his mother after his adventurer father disappeared years previously. One day, while at the Saluto ruins, a strange thing happens. A spirit stone, given to him by his lost father suddenly speaks. Startled, Justin decides to understand the reason for its calling. Meanwhile the heavy-handed military have forbidden access to the ruins outside Paam...













Grandia is a game for 'townies' as there are plans for ten major settlements in the game, each covering 100 screens. Hope none of them look like Barnsley.

'EE THAT'S GRANDIA

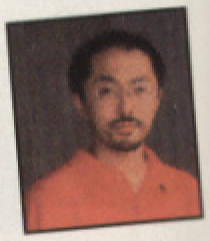
The three Game Arts staff headlining the massive Grandia team have years of experience behind them — not all in video games:

MIYAMI TAKESHI



He's the top programming genius at Game Arts, respected throughout the industry for his knowledge of technical matters.

TAKU KIMURA



He's a CG (Computer Generated visuals) artist at the Links agency, who has made his name outside games by creating popular TV commercials, including one for a Japanese train company.

TOM MEYERS



He's a top music producer with experience of Hollywood movies of the calibre of Terminator 2 and Mission:Impossible, and he's handling Grandia's soundtrack through 'Skywalker Sounds'.

It's nothing to do with Coronation Street or transport caffs





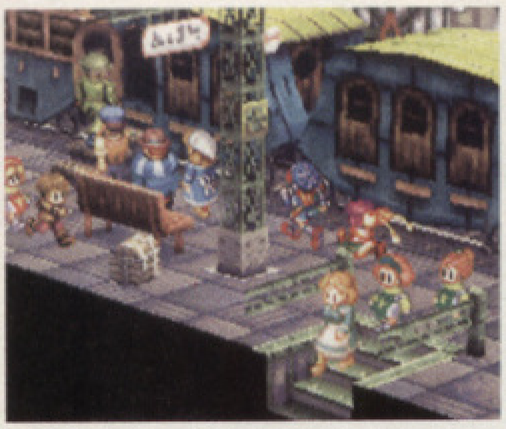


What a sterling display of 3-D polygon rotational found in Grandia. Thank God for the jap mags, that's all I can say.

SIZE DOES MATTER

Grandia isn't content to be the best, it wants to be the biggest as well. The scale of the opening section in the city of Paam is a good illustration. Paam's 3D model covers the equivalent of 100 screens, about ten times that found in a normal RPG 'town'. Also, RPG players are used to finding these places scarce with real characters and normally are able to search them without any hassle. In Grandia, Paam has lots of minor characters to interact with, and you must be invited into their homes before you can go searching for useful items! Overall, it's planned to have 30 'dungeons' in the game, and link them in sets of three to the ten major settlements.





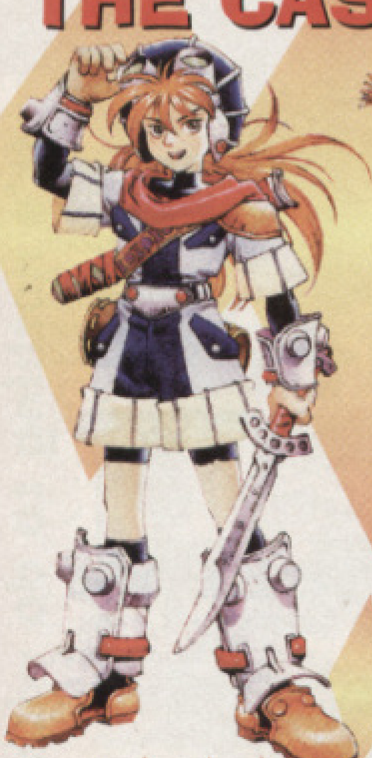


The city of Paam has discovered steam, which is great for trains, municipal fountains and clearing beggars of the street with super-heated hoses!

MEAN MACHINES has procured these top secret 'frames of animation', revealing that Grandia characters can move in many different directions! We're very relieved about that since walking in the same direction all the time might have made Grandia a tad 'linear'.



THE CAST











JUSTIN (14 years, 155cm, 47Kg)

He's a simple lad, god bless him, who wants to follow in his father's adventuring footsteps by travelling to Elencia, a newly discovered continent. His main flaw is having a one-sided view of life, unable to see it from anyone else's perspective.

FIINA (15 years, 160cm, 47Kg)

She hails from the Elencian city of New Paam, where she's the most experienced member of the Adventurer's guild, and the most popular gal around (the notes say this is due to her being pretty, which goes to prove the universal rule).

MEULEN (23years, 180cm, 70Kg)

An extremely handsome young soldier! His father is a ruthless Shogun warrior of the Baal army, but Meulen is not impressed with his methods. He meets up with Justin at the Saluto Ruins (where the stone speaks).

RIIN (15 years, 160cm, 47Kg)

She's directly under Meulen's command in the Baal army, and is not really paid much attention due to her quiet and pleasant character.

SUE (8 years, 120cm, 28Kg)

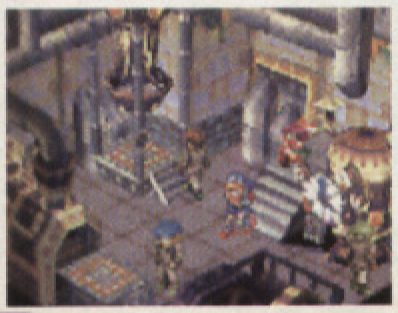
Literally the 'girl next door' to Justin. Sue thinks she can be his guardian, and she doesn't mind a rumble. She has a little pet, Pooi, given to her by Justin's father which can understand but not communicate except by whimpers. Bit pathetic, really.



At this point our friends have obviously reached the new world and are in desperate need of a loo and a save point.







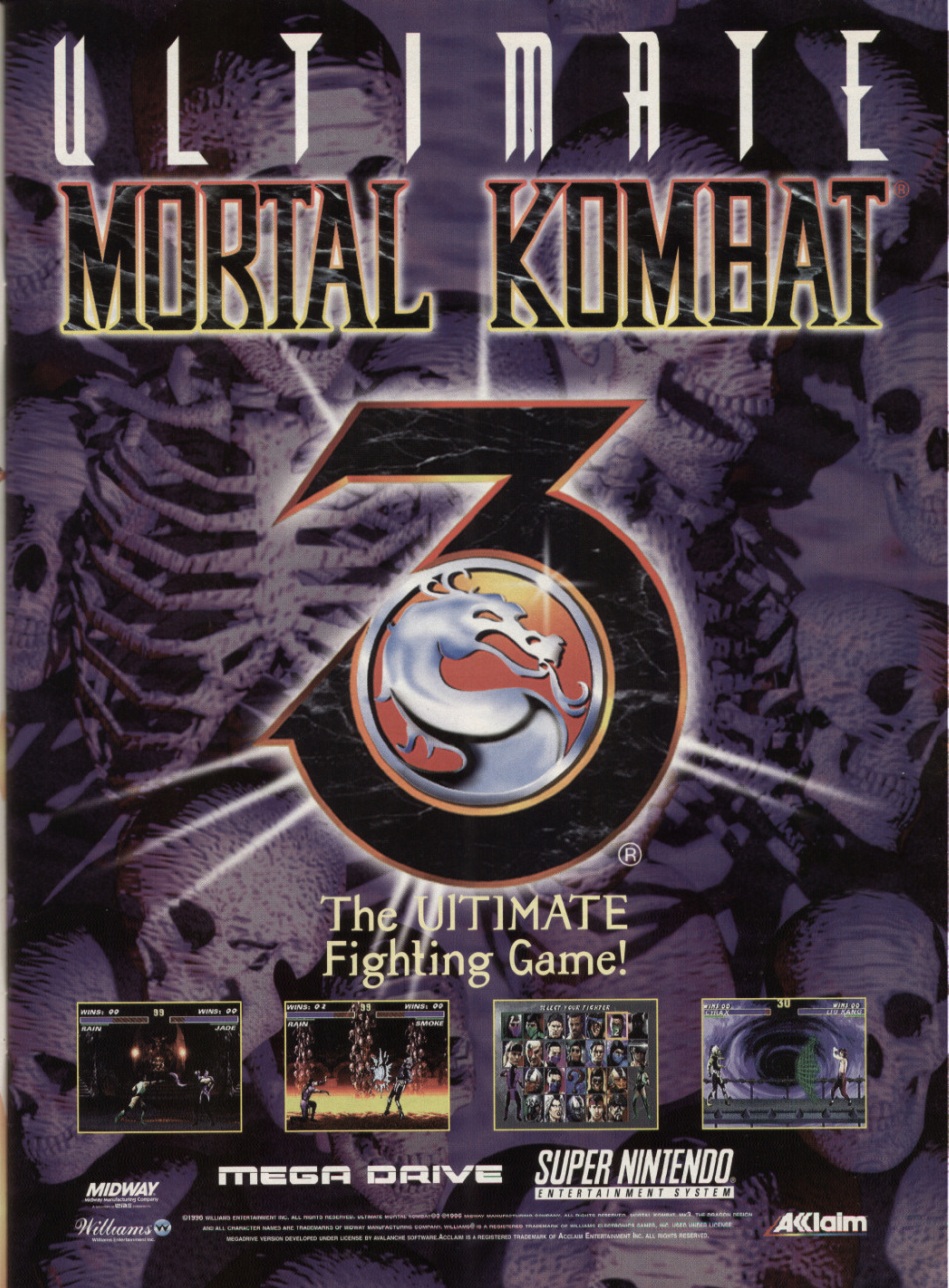


Transport yourself in Grandia style, with one of the game's outrageous sailing ships. Contraptions feature BIG in this game.



So this is the end of the world? Sod it, we must have taken a wrong turning somewhere around the Pit of Doom.

GRANDIA



ULTIMATE
MORTAL KOMBAT®
3®
The ULTIMATE Fighting Game!
WINS: 00
99
WINS: 00
RAIN
JADE
RAIN
SMOKE
SELECT YOUR FIGHTER
LIU KANG
MEGA DRIVE
SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
MIDWAY
Midway Manufacturing Company
Williams
Williams Entertainment Inc.
Acclaim


CEREMONIOUSLY CRYSTALLISED BY HIS TRIBE AFTER AN UNFORTUNATE HEAD-HUNTING ACCIDENT, KING SIODES' SKULL WAS MEANT AS A SYMBOL OF FORGIVENESS TO ERRORS OF JUDGEMENT...
PRECISION OF JUDGEMENT IS HOWEVER REQUIRED TO REMOVE IT....
TOMB RAIDER
THE GLASS WALLS OF THE CHAMBER ARE SAID TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE FORCE OF HIS CONSCIENCE ALONE.
WITH THE SKULL BEING CENTRALLY LOCATED, EQUAL FORCE IS EXERTED ON EACH SURFACE...
THIS IS WHAT YOU CAME FOR?
TO EARN THIS SKULL AS YOUR OWN IS SAID TO BRING ETERNAL PROTECTION.... I'D RISK MY LIFE FOR IT !!
GOOD !
THAT'S MORE WHAT I HAD IN MIND !
I DIDN'T MEAN UNNECESSARILY ! YOU'LL UPSET THE BALANCE OF...
FORCES?
OH DEAR !
THE CEILING WILL IMPLODE, AND THE FLOOR WILL....
COLLAPSE !
AAAGH!


TO SURVIVE, ONE NEEDS.....THE SPEED OF A CHEETAH...
THE STRENGTH OF A RHINO...
AND THE BELIEF...
OF A LUNATIC !!
BOOM
THE PROFESSOR IS LEFT WITH ETERNAL PROTECTION...
THANK HEAVENS !
WHILE LARA HEADS OFF FOR A NICE CUP OF TEA...
CAFE
WHERE HER REAL ADVENTURES WILL BEGIN !!

This month's reviews start with the sublime and end up with the ridiculous. Core's epic Tomb Raider receives the attention it deserves. Lookout for Scavenger's very long-awaited AMOK and an exclusive on Ubisoft's kart-fest, Street Racer.

review

Game Name	Tomb Raider		
Publisher	Core		
Release	Out Now	Price	£44.99
Game Style	3-D Adventure		
Import?	✗	Linkplay? ✗	Players 1
Control	Joypad		
Background	Technically pioneering portmanteu of game styles.		

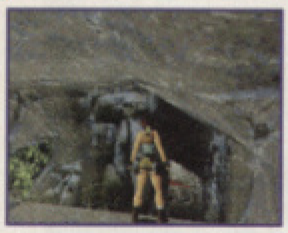
For a girl who doesn't have to get up and go to work the options are limited. Lara Croft found herself in that predicament: a mansion in the country and time on her hands.



But rather than live the life of a country gentlewoman, Lara laid plans of becoming an adventurer, not for financial gain but to 'play for sport'. Her travels took her to Calcutta, where the mysterious figure at the head of the shady Natla Technologies made contact. The challenge she set was in a whole new ball park to Lara's previous escapades: locating a mythical treasure, the Atlantean Scion, lying somewhere in the ruined Incan city of Qualopec, one of the most inaccessible ancient wonders of the world. Lara next phone call was to Air Peru — first class, non-smoking...



Nice treasures, but the food's terrible



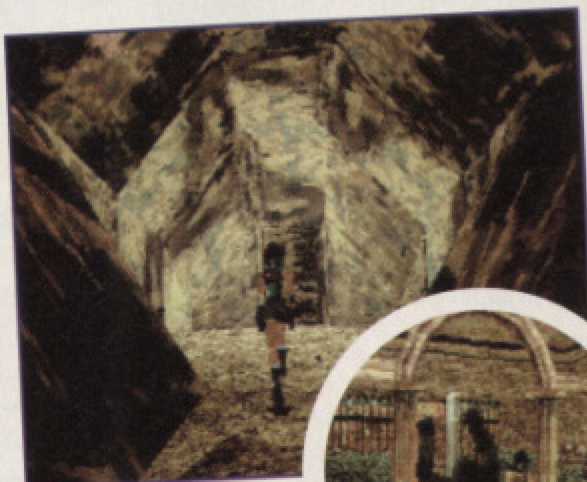






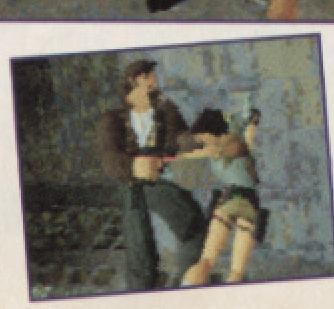
GLOBETROTTER

Lara's adventure take her to remnants of three documented civilisations of the ancient world; the Incan, Roman and Egyptian. She makes her way through scenes of decaying grandeur, the architectural excesses of past millenia's master builders. She will not find it easy to reach the inner areas, which have been protected by traps and puzzles, doors and switches. Locating the three shards of the Scion will also involve feats of awesome athleticism as she swims, leaps and climbs her way through the landscape.







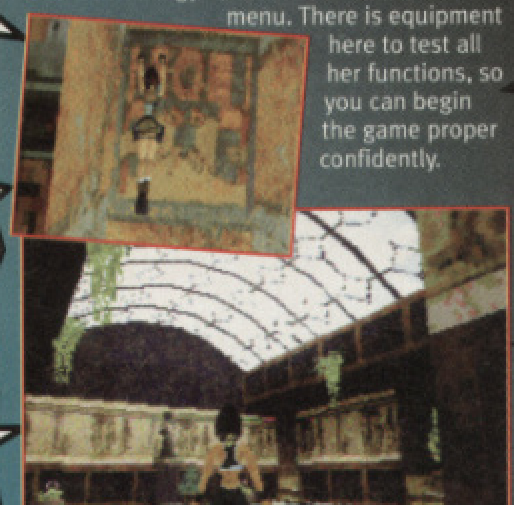

Go Lara, Go Lara, Go Lara, Go Lara…





EARLY WORKOUT

The only way to control Lara effectively is to practice. Lara's mansion has been converted into a custom gym, selectable from the main menu. There is equipment here to test all her functions, so you can begin the game proper confidently.



PRECISION CONTROL

Although the range of Lara's action make her a handful, the control method is designed with precision. A standing or running jump will always travel the same distance, and the play area is subtly divided into quads to make distances easier to judge. As the game progresses, you will be required to string several control commands together in sequence.



Big leap



Sliding



Pushing block



Crouching/ picking up object



Hanging tough

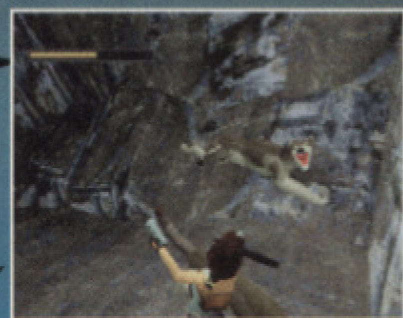




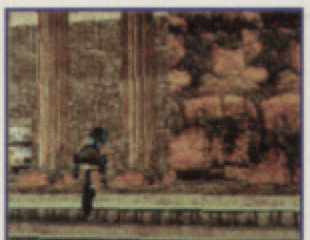


ANIMUS

For the most part, you will encounter hostile animals in Tomb Raider. All constructed from polygons, animal classes begin with lowly bats and wolves, before lions, baboons and crocodiles appear, which make tougher opponents. The animals show a remarkable level of intelligence. Not only will they hunt Lara, they will back off from gunfire, or wait in ambush. A dying animal will writhe in agony. You have human predators too, out to recover the Scion themselves, who will engage you in fierce gun battles often at the most inopportune moments.









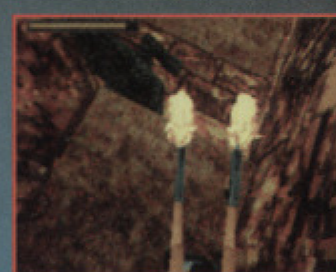


MAGIC BULLETS

Lara is adept with several weapons but, pistols apart, she must locate them. Tomb Raider is not like Doom, there is less to kill but ammo is very scarce, with only a couple of precious bullets found at a time. All but a ew of these are hidden in 'secret' places. u will discover how many of these cubby es you missed after a level is complete.







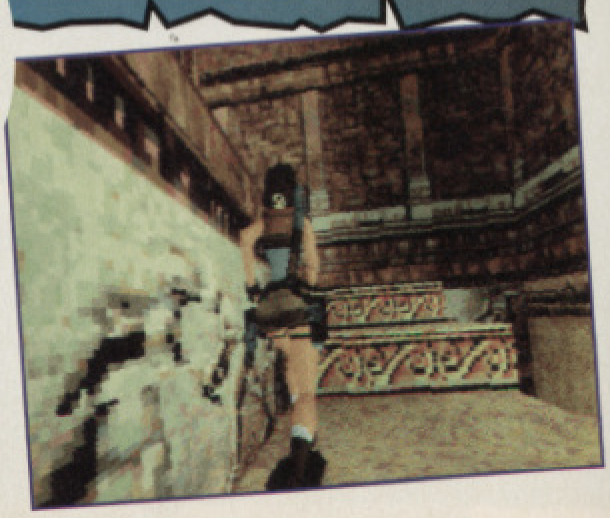














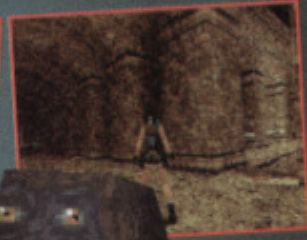


LOOK AT MY WORKS AND DESPAIR

No game has ever created interiors on the scale of Tomb Raider. The game starts in reasonably confined areas, but soon opens out onto full-scale collosseums and imposing temples which Lara must scale to vertiginous heights. It can take an hour just to run around some levels! The camera function is a clever way of letting you survey a scene from Lara's 'eyes' without moving. A prime example of Tomb Raider scale is the aquaduct from the Palace of Midas. A huge pool is supported a hundred feet above ground level by an elaborate sequence of arches.













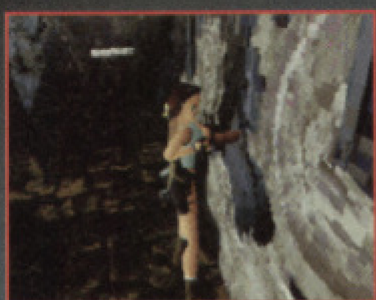




LOST VALLEY

You are now deep beneath the Andes. Jungle has invaded much of this underground level, shrouding its secrets, and its dangers.

GEAR MECHANISM
This contraption is the key to finding your way out of the Lost Valley. Sadly, it's busted.

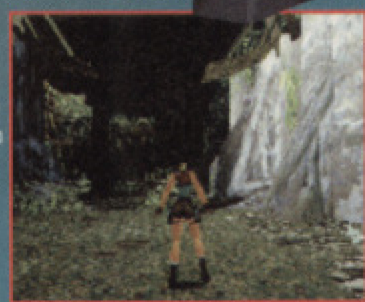


ROPE BRIDGE
A moment of truth as you and Lara both test your jumping skills to the limit. At this height, the reward for failure is death.

WATERFALL
The current from the underground river sweeps you dramatically over the precipice.



THE VALLEY
Descending from a vantage point, you come face to face with an ancient cold-blooded evil.

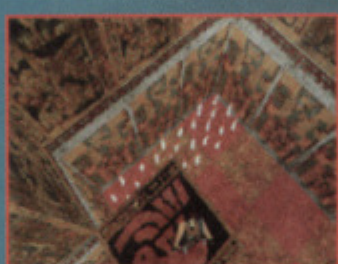




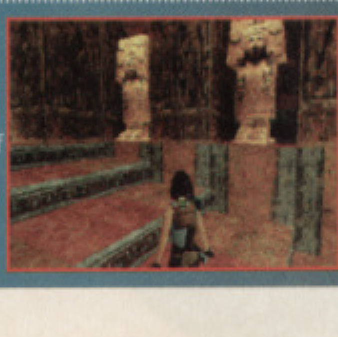
TOMB OF QUALOPEC

A deathly hush blankets this preserved part of Incan culture. The influence of long-dead minds aim to protect the Scion at all costs.

SPIKES
You go up against the cunning of the Incan trap architects.



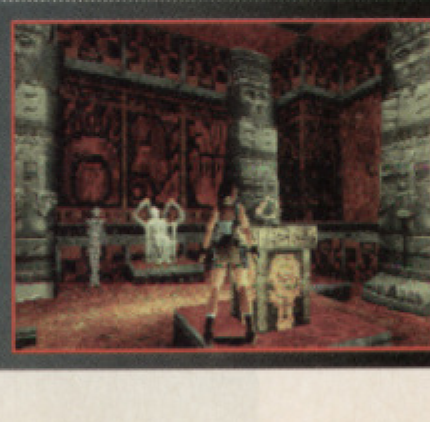
STAIRWAY
This eerie setting is typical of the linking sections of the game. Is there something more?



ANIMAL DOORS
The decorative symbols are one way of keeping your bearing in this bewildering level.



THRONE ROOM
You can see the Scion. Go ahead, take it. Why are you hesitating?

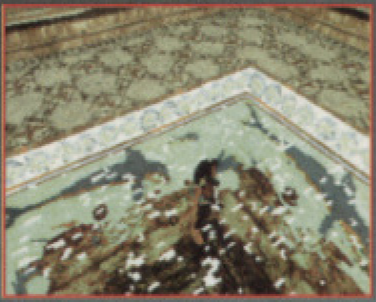




ST FRANCIS' FOLLY

The Folly is a huge vertical design hundreds of feet high. One slip is probably fatal. Four tasks, with mythological codes hold the keys to the exit.

NEPTUNE
Be swept down a huge well backed with swirling music. You may gently drown before ever seeing light again.



THOR
The properties of the God of lightning and his legendary hammer both feature in this quirky sub-quest.



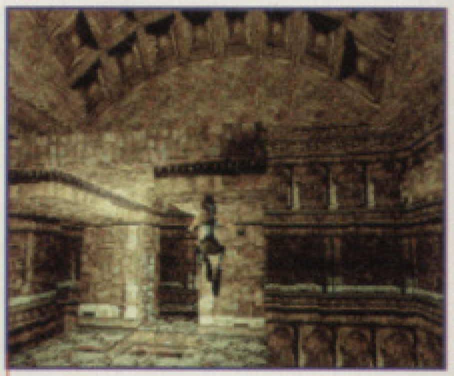
ATLAS
A trick borrowed from Indiana Jones, but Lara must have the nerve to induce danger, and the skill to outrun it.



DAMOCLES
A deathly hush descends over this delapidated chamber, almost waiting for you to steal its artefact and then exact its revenge.



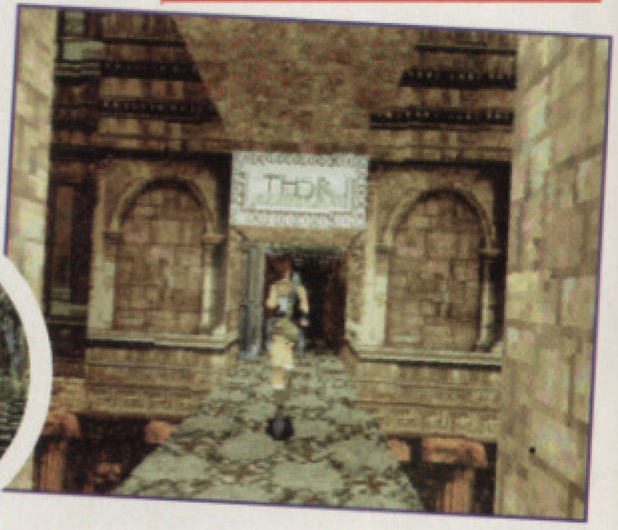




The central part of the folly is so dangerous a pair of reinforced scants is recommended before play.







All that glitters is not gold, as Lara finds to her cost.









comment



MATT

Make no mistake - this game is state-of-the-art. The amount of time the programmers must have spent putting this together leaves you wondering whether they are now all residing in mental hospitals under the dellusion of actually existing in the very world Tomb Raider creates. Come to think of it, so might you when you've been playing it for a while, such are its addictive and immersive qualities. At the outset you'll need patience, the controls being complicated initially. But once you're used to how Lara moves you can really begin to appreciate the game's epic ambience: the moments of suspense as you wander through eerie caves, the adrenaline rush of beating off attacking dinosaurs, and the relief of solving the increasingly complicated puzzles. If you're still lacking in faith, Tomb Raider puts you straight on just what the Saturn is capable of.

comment



GUS

Playing Tomb Raider puts a lot of existing Saturn fodder into perspective. Here is a game which strives to create a new gaming experience with programmers who are obviously not intimidated with the perceived limits of the machine. The 3D world of Tomb Raider is a wonder in itself, but it soon takes a back seat to the imagination, creativity and intelligence which is seen in the game design. The creators have thought your way through the game with their puzzles and challenges. They know when you will be elated at your achievements and caught off guard, and when to bring you from claustrophobic spaces into awesome vaulted chambers of unfeasible intricacy. Nathan McCree's score is beautifully haunting, stirring and unsettling: a range of emotions not normally associated with video game music. The whole affair is 'directed' like a movie, to dazzling effect. There is nothing quite like Tomb Raider.



Lara takes a riddle at the Sphinx, lucky there's a few palm trees nearby. Sorry, Lara solves the riddle of the Sphinx.











THE COLLOSEUM

An abandoned pit where scenes of gladiatorial carnage once thrilled crowds. Lara fights her own battle against the wily Pierre Dudont.

LAKE
Getting your feet wet here is obligatory, but inspect the shadows moving in the water more closely.



COLLOSEUM
The seating for thousands of people forms huge empty terraces and makes for a spectacular sight.



FACADE
A temple frontage built into the rock becomes a series of narrow ledges for Lara to traverse.

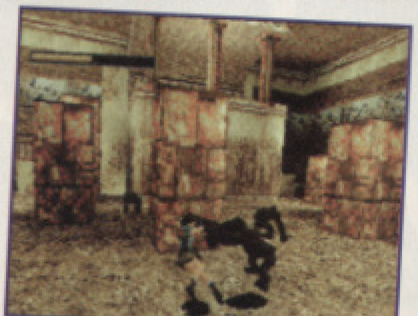


EMPEROR'S BALCONY
The highest point within the colloseum is the sumptious apartment from where the guest of honour offered his life or death verdict.

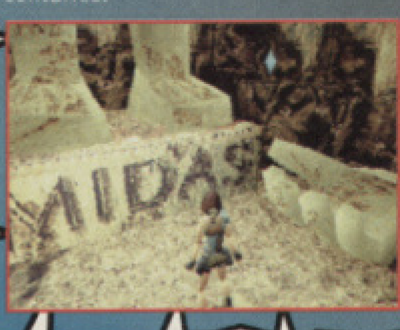


TEMPLE OF MIDAS

The most challenging level in the midst of the game, which is a puzzler's delight. Three rooms conceal metallic prizes in a manner of elaborate guises. The final puzzle is the one which has taxed Alchemists for centuries.







THE CISTERN

The Romans expertise in engineering water forms the basis of a gargantuan level where manipulating vast quantites of the stuff is both puzzle and solution.





scores

GRAPHICS The realisation of a 3D world is spectacular, with incredible level designs. Sometimes the texture mapping is overdone, making things indistinct. Lara however, moves like a dream, with fluid, wholly convincing animation.

93

SOUND Tomb Raider is a game that uses silence to atmospheric effect! The superb music occurs incidentally, like a film score, and is a selection of hugely effective orchestral and choral arrangements.. The sound effects are badly sampled, though.

90

PLAYABILITY The character control is excellent, after practice and the puzzles are more sophisticated than any previous Saturn 'adventure' game, being both logical and cryptic. There is a strong element of compulsion to sit and play for long sessions.

94

LASTABILITY Initially seeming too easy, the levels expand to unbelievable proportions, and even Sega's own testers have found it heavy going uncovering all the secrets. There is also the unusual facet of later levels offering genuinely different gameplay.

93

overall

This is unarguably the best thing Core have ever done. The technical achievements are balanced by excellent game design and a well-crafted plot. If you have any interest in adventures, you must have Tomb Raider.

94

review

Game Name	Hardcore 4X4
Publisher	Gremlin Interactive
Release	November — Price £49.99
Game Style	Racing
Import?	✗ — Linkplay? ✗ — Players 1
Control	Joypad
Background	An original off-road racer like Junior Kickstart. But with trucks.

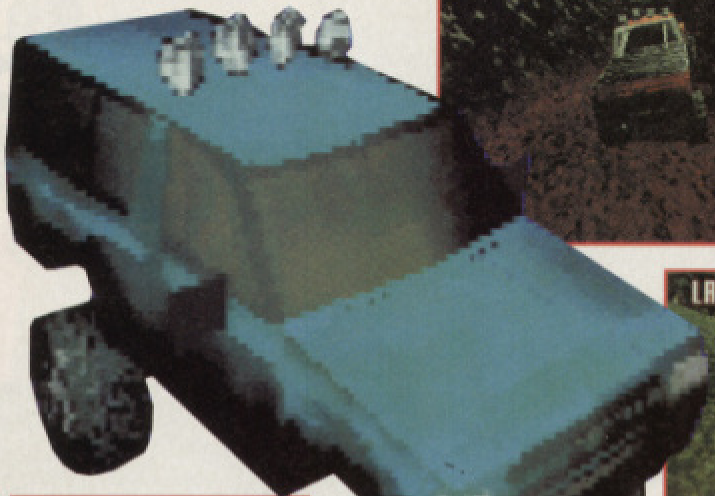
Ever felt the urge to jump in a Land Rover and hurtle through forests at breakneck speeds? Ever considered plunging over huge drop-offs in a pumped-up pick-up?

Well now you can, thanks to Gremlin's frantic off-road racer, Hardcore 4x4. You no longer need concern yourself with power slides or even trying to stay on the track; with the customised badass mud-pluggers in Hardcore, you can just drive over anything that gets in your way. Like mountains, for instance.















In Hardcore, you're very conscious of being part of a pack. The other trucks are rarely much further away than a few feet, and the like to play rough.





The mountain course is one of the coolest, with a treacherous slope on the way up, and a torturous one on the way down.

CLIMATICALLY CHALLENGED

Weather plays an important part in Hardcore. In Championship Mode the conditions are random; but for a single race you can select 'fine', 'overcast' or 'stormy'. Overcast means grey skies and light drizzle, but stormy is enough to make even the Sun Baked Canyon look like North Wales on a wet Tuesday afternoon. Blizzards, churned-up mud and swirling ash clouds also conspire to make your life a misery on this setting.





ROCK 'ARD

Perhaps because of the nature of the courses, Hardcore 4x4 is initially almost impossible to play. Your truck is prone to bouncing about all over the place, and tips over quite easily too. The fact that the circuits are littered with potholes and drop-offs doesn't make life any easier, and loose gravel surfaces mean that good traction is not a commonly observed phenomenon. Whilst this may be off-putting to novice gamers, it does mean that the game offers lasting challenge and once you've mastered the game's controls; you'll find that there are certain 'racing lines' that avoid the worst of the potholes. Whether you can stick to them as you tangle with the other competitors is a different matter.











YOU KNOW THE SCORE

Time Trial, Single Race and Championship modes are available in Hardcore, all playable in Novice, Pro and Extreme settings except for the Time Trial which is automatically set on Pro level. Every mode, except for Novice, offers a stiff challenge, and even the easiest level is no pushover as you struggle to retain control of your vehicle. The 'real world physics' mean that it's quite easy to flip your truck over on the outrageous cambers, and loose or icy track surfaces offer precious little traction for your All Terrain Radials. In addition, players can select manual or automatic transmission; with all the hills and dips in the circuits, you'll have to be pretty nifty with that gear box if you want to get anywhere.

HARDCORE 4X4















POWER STEERING

Your badass truck comes complete with all mod cons including independent suspension, a classy stereo and, er... a handbrake. Snigger not though, because this rapid stopping power can be harnessed to slide your vehicle round the tighter hairpin bends. It's also useful on courses like the ice stage, where severe lack of steering response requires careful use of the hand brake to get round most of the bends in one piece. Unfortunately the stereo seems to be tuned to a dodgy soft rock station, but there is one surf/punk number which shines out through the musical mediocrity.







SLOANE RANGER

The half dozen vehicles on offer should go down well with Land Rover fans. Each has it's own strengths and weakness and performs best on a particular course.

BUSH MASTER

Good grip, not quite so good top speed and indifferent suspension. Plus an appealing lime green paint job.



DUST DEVIL

The Dust Devil is average in all areas and is also useful for vacuuming the stairs.



ICE BREAKER

Excellent grip and good suspension, but the Ice Breaker has a lousy top speed.



SIDE WINDER

Fast and with good road holding, the Side Winder also has very taut suspension so you're in for a rough ride.



BRIMSTONE

The Brimstone has awesome suspension and above average grip but doesn't go very fast.



ROCK HOPPER

The fastest truck has decent suspension, but with not much grip you'll be all over the place when tackling bends.



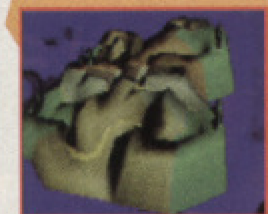
LET'S OFF ROAD!

There are six courses, each one designed to give your fluorescent Vitara a good kicking. There is often a good 'racing line' to each circuit which avoids the worst potholes, but there are no distinct splits in the tracks.





HIGH CAMBER PASS
A relatively simple course to ease you into the game, High Camber Pass does have a couple of rickety bridges over a deep gorge.



SUN BAKED GULCH
This sun-drenched track is set in a narrow canyon which twists and turns past deserted mine workings and strange rock formations.



WAR ZONE
A desert based course, complete with camels and Arabian style villages. With a hint of topicality, tanks can also be seen nestling amongst the palm tress.



DUNNE FOREST
Like the RAC Rally, the Forest circuit includes short road sections as well as enough bumps and dips to seriously knacker your truck's suspension.



THE DEVIL's KITCHEN
Make sure you don't burst your tyres on the hot lava as you slide around on the loose ash surface of this track. In stormy conditions, this one's a real pain.



PACK ICE SCRAMBLE
Large areas of sheet ice on this course require delicate use of the handbrake, as your steering becomes next to useless! A few stiff climbs add to the chaos.













This gulch is drier than meeting of the Iranian branch of Alcoholics Anonymous. That was a joke, lads don't issue a Fatwa or anything.



Some kids have made a slide with a bucket of water, so the truck up ahead has gone arse-over-spoiler.

comment



GUS

The first thing you'll notice about Hardcore 4x4 is that it's blinkin' rock 'ard! There seems to be little control of your careering mud plugger, but once you can tame it, the game is actually a top laugh. The landscapes are varied and nicely detailed, but the music is a bit too AOR for my liking. The only areas where Hardcore falls down are a lack of a two player option (although it's hard to see how the same level of detail could be sustained in a split-screen set-up) and the fact that the difficulty level may deter novice gamers from what is otherwise a pretty much unique Saturn game.

comment



MATT

To truly simulate the full-on off-road driving experience that is Hardcore 4x4, I'd suggest playing the game with a couple of redneck mates in the room, a shotgun, a roll bar wrapped around your seat and Bryan Adams blasting out of every speaker in the house. As it stands, the Gremlin boys have managed to producea truly tough racing challenge that should take hours to master. Unfortunately the extremely pixelated appearance of each level and poor vehicle handling result in a less than polished product. On the plus side it'll probably sell by the truck load in the good old US of A.

scores

GRAPHICS
Highly detailed textures with a low level of clipping. The frame rate is slightly sluggish and some of the weather effects are bit pixelated.

84

SOUND
Nice crashing and banging effects, and okay music. Apart from the surf/punk ditty, which is ace.

75

PLAYABILITY
Hardcore is extremely hard to get in to, so novice gamers may find it virtually unplayable. Once you've mastered it though, it's a top laugh.

82

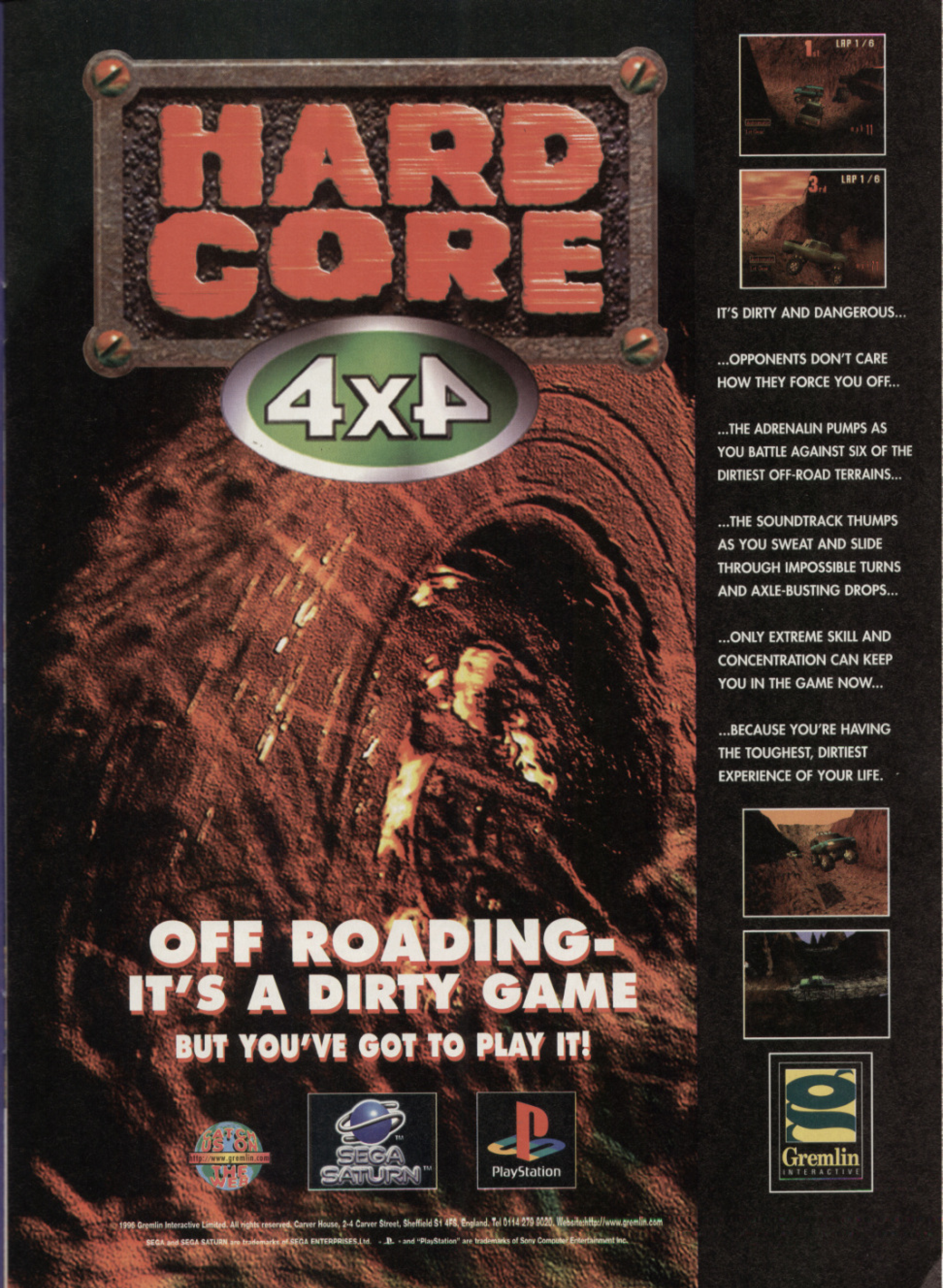
LASTABILITY
Because of the extreme handling of the vehicles, you'll have to play Hardcore for ages to master it. No two player mode.

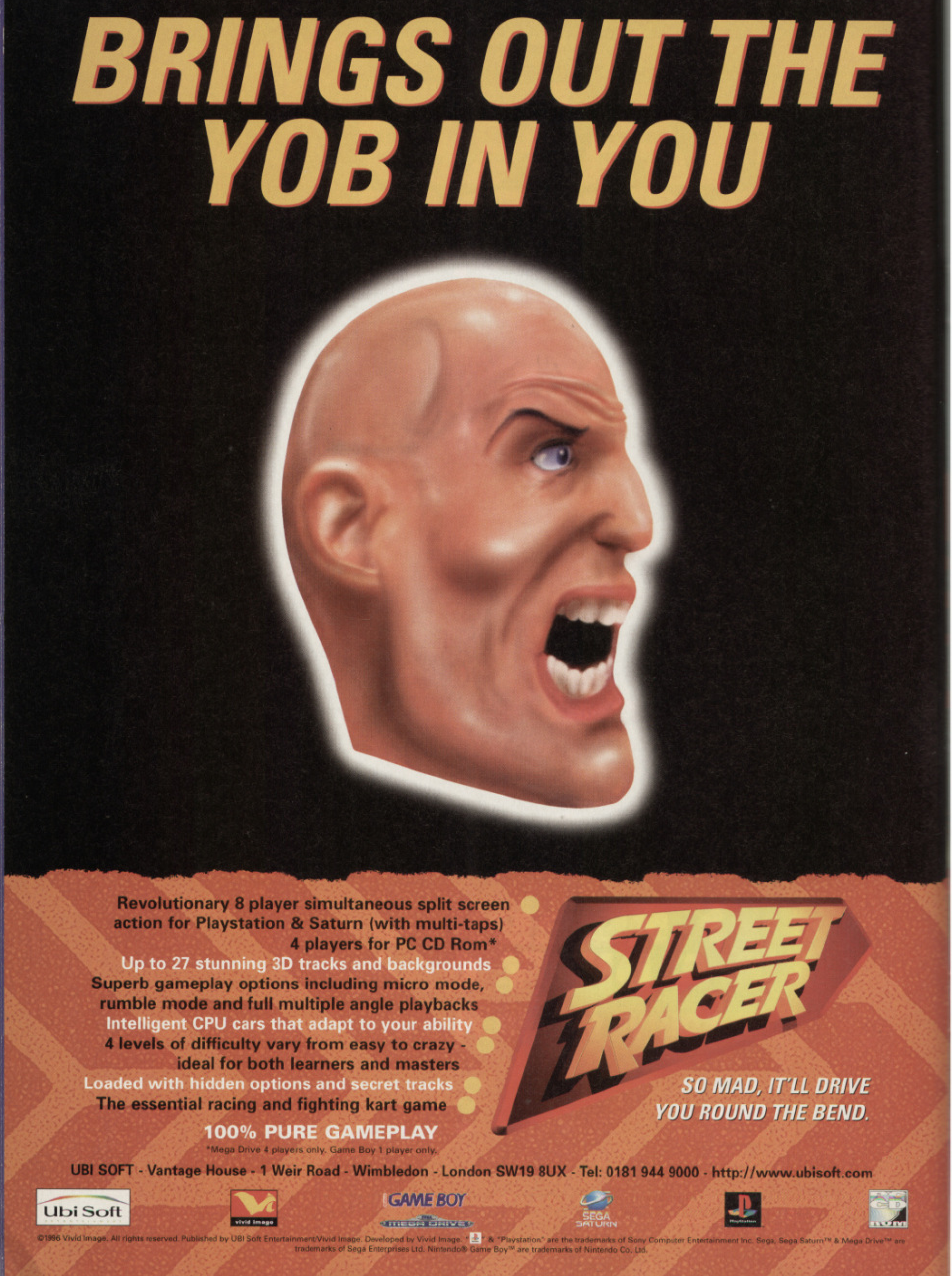
86

overall

A game that offers long term challenge because it's so rock hard to play. It's let down slightly by a lack of a two player mode and initial playability problems.

84


HARD CORE
4x4
IT'S DIRTY AND DANGEROUS...
...OPPONENTS DON'T CARE HOW THEY FORCE YOU OFF...
...THE ADRENALIN PUMPS AS YOU BATTLE AGAINST SIX OF THE DIRTIEST OFF-ROAD TERRAINS...
...THE SOUNDTRACK THUMPS AS YOU SWEAT AND SLIDE THROUGH IMPOSSIBLE TURNS AND AXLE-BUSTING DROPS...
...ONLY EXTREME SKILL AND CONCENTRATION CAN KEEP YOU IN THE GAME NOW...
...BECAUSE YOU'RE HAVING THE TOUGHEST, DIRTIEST EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE.
OFF ROADING-
IT'S A DIRTY GAME
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO PLAY IT!
CATCH US ON THE WEB
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MEAN 16

CTORY· MAIL· Q&A·TIPS· GUIDES ·DIRECTORY· MAIL· Q&A·TIPS· GUIDES ·DIRE

It's all change this month. Out goes Dan and in comes new kid on the block, Steve. Being the complete slavvering games monster that he is, our man Steve is desperate to get his grubby mitts on the latest tips, hints and codes to test out. If you've discovered a truly cool cheat and want to see your name in lights (or print at least) then get scribbling to: Mean Machines Sega, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Truly original cheats may just win a stunning prize from our goodies cupboard but more likely than not we'll just send you some piece of old tat that's been lying around the office for months. Ta, ta!

SATURN TIPS

FIGHTING VIPERS

LOADS OF SECRETS!

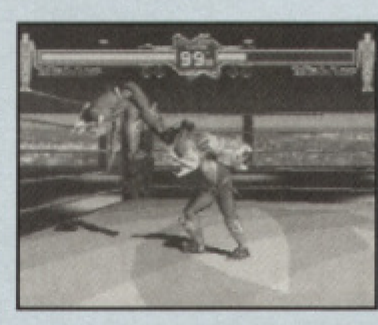
Here are all of the cheats currently known for both the Japanese import and official UK versions of the game. Most of them require quite a bit of skillful playing, so be prepared to work for these excellent rewards!



PEPSIMAN (JAPANESE ONLY)

When playing a one player Arcade game, lose the first round with a Perfect and do badly in the second. With a bit of luck, a new challenger will enter just in time to save you, and you'll have to take on Pepsiman. Defeat him, go on to complete the game and you'll be able to play as him from then on.

MAHLER



Simply finish the game once with any character to get Mahler added to your list of playable characters. All of his moves are displayed in Training Mode, so you can learn to play as him properly.

BM

To have BM as a selectable two player character (only the first three secret characters can be used in Arcade Mode), finish the game as Mahler.

KUMA CHAN

This is slightly obscure. When playing on one of the Armstone Town stages, win a round by knocking your opponent through the railings at the giant bear in the background. If you're lucky, Kuma Chan will be added to your playable characters, where you'll discover that he plays just like Sanman.

UKELELE CANDY

This special Candy costume is accessed by completing the game as Candy on Normal Mode. She can perform all of regular Candy's moves as well as Raxel's guitar smash (F, F+P).



SCHOOLGIRL CANDY

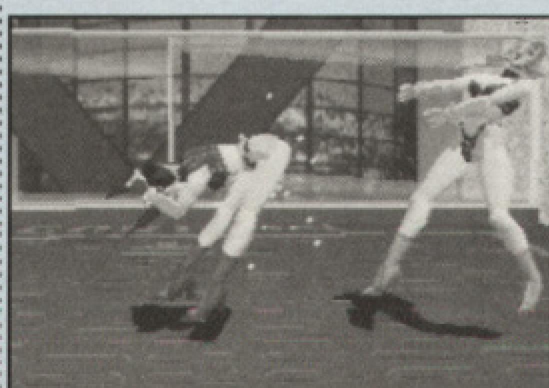
Another Candy costume is made available in the multi-player modes by finishing the game as Candy on Hard Mode. All of her moves are the same as usual.



The US version lacks Candy in either her schoolgirl outfit or underwear. Why?

UNDERWEAR CANDY

To make Candy fight in just her underwear, finish the game on Very Hard in Hyper Mode. Now, on your next fight, lose your armour to see that she's just wearing a small pair of pants and a bra! From now on, you can select Candy in this mode by holding the X button when you select her.



A scantily clad Candy dishes out a painful rear attack. Bottoms up girls!

CHANGE HONEY TO CANDY (JAPANESE ONLY)

If you don't happen to like the name "Honey", you can change the on-screen messages and announcer's voice so that they say "Candy" instead, just like the UK version. Just hold the Z button when selecting Honey, and her name will be changed.

OPTION+

The Option+ menu is gained when you complete the game once. It has options to view all of the ending artwork for all the characters you've finished the game with, as well as a stage select and invincibility options. On top of this, there are two '??????' options which need to be uncovered. Here's how...

BIG HEADS

This option is added once you've finished the game as every character (including the secret ones). It makes all of the fighters' heads and feet bigger, making them look like trolls!



Play Fighting Vipers in Virtua Kids mode. What a bunch of big heads!

WALL DISP OFF

This option is added once you've put an "OK" next to all of the moves for at least three characters in Training Mode. This means that you have to go through every single move, performing each one perfectly. The option makes the walls invisible, making the characters slightly bigger than usual and stopping any of the occasional slowdown.



STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2

SECRET CHARACTERS AND TRAINING CHEATS

Here are the secret character codes, enabling you to play as fighters not included in the PlayStation version of the game! Once any of these cheats have been entered in Arcade Mode, the characters

Check out our exclusive Fighting Vipers cheats!

can be selected in Versus Mode by highlighting their name and holding Start while selecting your fighter.

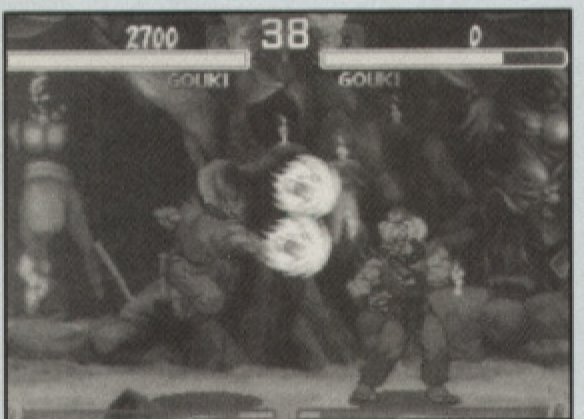
To play as original Chun-Li, highlight standard Chun-Li and hold Start. Keep it held for five seconds and press any button to select her. The only real difference is that her costume is changed and her fireball now needs to be charged like in SF Zero, rather than the Yoga Flame motion of Zero 2.



To play as Evil Ryu, go to the character select screen and highlight Ryu. Now hold Start and move to Adon, Gouki, Adon, then back to Ryu. Now select him with any button while still holding Start. He can do all of Ryu's moves, plus a level 3 "firecracker" like Gouki and a Super Dragon Punch (double fireball and kick).



To play as Shin-Gouki, go to the player select screen and highlight Gouki. Now hold Start and press Down, Down, Right, Down, Right, Down, Down, Down, Left, Down, Left, Down, then select him with any button. He can perform double air fireballs and is much faster and harder than any other fighter!
To play as original Zangief, highlight standard Zangief and hold Start, then move to Sagat, Sodom, Rose, Birdie, Nash, Dhalsim, Ryu, Adon, Guy, Ken, then back to Zangief. Now select him with any button while still holding Start. He has no super combo bar and can only perform the spinning piledriver and standard lariat moves, but is much more powerful than his SF Zero 2 counterpart.



Shin Gouki's powerful air fireballs are the key to victory.

To play as original Dhalsim, highlight standard Dhalsim and hold Start, then move to Zangief, Sagat, Nash, then back to Dhalsim. Now select him with any button while still holding Start. He has no super combo bar and can only perform his original moves. You also don't need to choose long or short-range attacks, as it's all done for you.



This cheat allows you to have infinite custom combo time in Training Mode. Go to the Training character select screen and hold the L button and Start. Now choose your character and perform a custom combo at any level. You'll notice that the shadows stay with you for the whole round and you can also move backwards and jump. This lets you get up to 99 hit combos!

To give yourself rapid-fire attacks in Training Mode, go to the Training character select screen and hold the R button and Start, then choose your character. Now, you'll see that you can punch or kick incredibly rapidly by just holding the button.

You can perform both of these Training Mode cheats at the same time by holding L, R and Start on the character select screen, making it really easy to do very impressive custom combos.

DESTRUCTION DERBY

SECRET TRACK AND INVINCIBILITY

To access the secret track, Ruined Monastery without winning the tournament, simply select Wreckin' Racing Championship Mode and enter your name as "REFLECT!". Now go back to the menu, choose Practice and cycle through the tracks until you see the question mark.

To make your car invincible, select Wreckin' Racing Championship Mode and enter your name as "!DAMAGE!". Now play and you'll receive no damage!

BUST-A-MOVE 2

SECRET MODE

@BODYTEXT:If you've finished the game already then you'll know about this cheat. If you haven't completed it yet, here's what you've been missing. On the start screen press X, Left, Right, X. This will let you watch the end sequence and play the puzzle game on different backgrounds.

SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97

SPECIAL MOVES

@BODYTEXT:If you've bought a copy of Sega's awesome new footie game you'll know that the instruction manual doesn't reveal how to perform the excellent special moves. So we're going to instead!

BACKHEEL

Simply press backwards and B at the same time to hit the ball behind you.

OVERHEAD FLICK

Tap the D-Pad forwards, backwards, forwards, and press the B button. Your player will flick the ball with his heel and right over his head



Alan Shearer wannabes can improve their footie skills with these handy tips.

LIGHT CHIP

Tap the C button twice to chip the ball lightly in front of your player.

FAKE TURN

Tap the D-Pad twice to either side when running to perform a quick shimmy, which is often enough to wrongfoot someone.

ONE-TWO

Press the R and B buttons together at the same time to pass the ball to a nearby teammate, who'll tap it straight back to your player. Once you've passed the ball, you can run in any direction and the return pass will fall just in front of your player.



We think Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 is the bee's knees. Goooaalll!!!!

SPECIAL SHOT

When in the penalty area, tap the A button twice to perform a special low shot.

INSTANT CROSS

Get to either side of the penalty area and press the C button to cross the ball right into the middle every time.

ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3

SECRET ENDURANCE FIGHT

James Jackson from Buxton, Derbyshire has discovered a way of fighting Ermac and Mileena in an endurance battle.
Fight through the game as usual, and in the final round before the endurance match, don't use Block, Run or Low Kick and avoid using your combos. Then, when the "Finish Him/Her!" message has disappeared and your opponent is on the floor, press and hold B+C+R. After a ten second delay the "Loading" screen should appear and you'll battle with the hidden characters above the pit! That'll be really good if you can manage to get it to work!

Mark Stacey from Bath says that if you fight as Shang Tsung and morph into Kung Lao to finish your opponent with a standard hat throw special move (B, F, LP), a blue image will come out of your enemy when you morph back to Shang Tsung!

MEGA DRIVE TIPS

MORTAL KOMBAT 3

SECRET TURBO MODE

Peter White from South Ockenden, Essex, says that he's discovered a new cheat for Mortal Kombat 3. Use the cheat to access Smoke on the title screen (A, B, B, A, Down, A, B, B, A, Down, Up, Up) and let the demo run through. When the title screen reappears, do the same cheat again and you'll hear "Smoke Wins". Now you can play the game in extra hard Turbo mode!

THOR 2

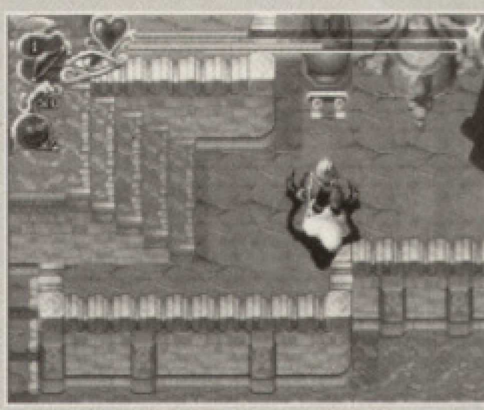
PART 2

No one does RPG guides like MEAN MACHINES. So we done another one, for the rather ace Thor on Saturn.



12. THE WARP ROOM

The ante-room to the Darkness boss contains six holes under the thorns to be removed by Shade, each taking you to a different location. You will use this room frequently as a means of jumping between areas of the map.



BOTTOM RIGHT
Water shrine. Summon brass from the switch and break the crystal. the earth gem means that Bawu can now create earth energy directly for you. There is a switch shade can pull near the exit to the town.

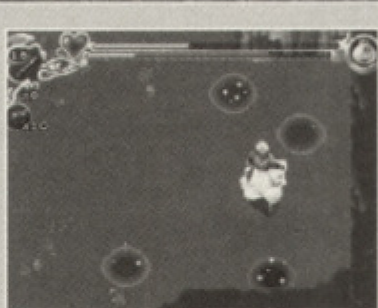
TOP RIGHT
Sound shrine. Summon brass to shatter the crystals on the left and take a rod scroll.

TOP MIDDLE
Point above the abyss, fire shrine. Use the air spirit to reach the robot across on the right.

BOTTOM MIDDLE
On the bridge, outside Aquaria town

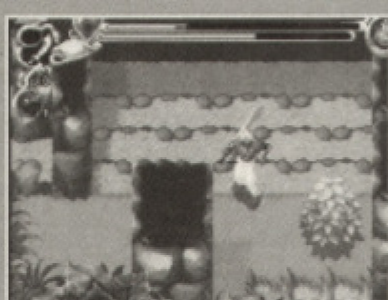
TOP LEFT
Outside valley of dead

BOTTOM LEFT
Outside Darkness shrine.



Clear the thorns with your newly acquiered spirit.

13. VALLEY OF THE DEAD



Enter wth Shade and travel to the far left, where there is a switch to pull. Now summon Dytto and have her freeze the small water jet into an icicle step. Summon Bawu using the brown coloured reeds and create spirit energy so your sword can break through the stone pillars at the bottom of the screen, allowing you to collect a scroll. Use this spirit energy to break the stone switch near the three trees at the top right of the valley.

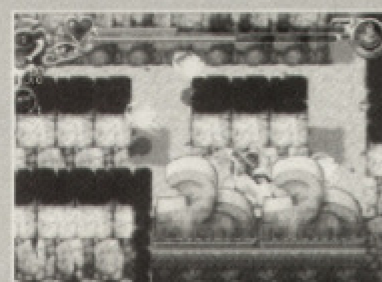
Summon Shade from the crystals bottom left and use him to destroy the small thorn at ground level. Use the green spirit energy to smash the large rock behind the crystals, revealing a highly useful recharge point. Remove the large thorn from top right and head north. The next area contains a strange frozen 'Tokipin' under a bush. Charge your rod and use it to release a treasure spirit. You can use him to attack the other chests and break the large stone pillar. If you clear all enemies without entering the pit, a bonus scroll is yours. You should be able to collect a fourth ruby, enabling Efreet to create fire energy. Go north and use the shade to pull the switch. The next chamber is tiered and full of springs. Ignore the switch at present. Keep going up.



On the next level, ride the platforms to a bush hiding an earth energy. This will break the stone to open the doors, but if you keep travelling right, you'll find a small switch that drops a chest containing a scroll to the level below. In the top left of this room, on the grass triangle, is a hidden elixir!



14. SKY SHRINE



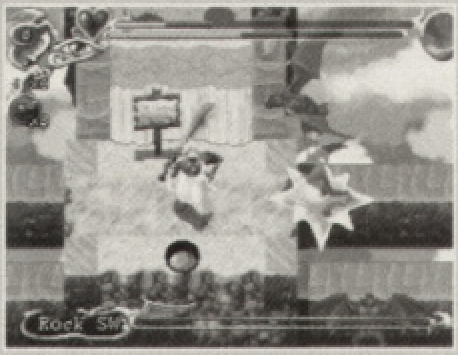
The first couple of rooms are simple enough. Take bombs into the room with the torch raised on the platform and jump and bomb to light the torch and start the mechanism. To the right of this is the first of three switches you need to trip with Shade. Moving north, the way splits. Go left first, lighting the torch. Travel on platforms until you see the one in the corner. Take the chest out with an arrow revealing a switch. Now you can retrieve a key from soldiers behind a door. On the way back, use a bomb to ignite the platform torch, which will bring the chest containing an onyx within reach. You may have to jump into the thorns to reach with your bomb. Use your key to open the door and pull the switch. The third switch, to the right hand side, is easy to get. Then return to the furthest right point, where a platform is waiting to take you into the sky. Leave the bottom of the screen after saving your position.



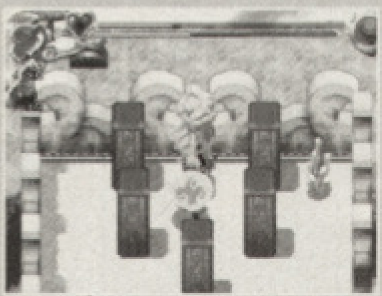
The sky walkways are treacherous, but with Shade as your spirit you need never fall off. The switches you activate drop warpholes down to ground level, so it's easy to get back up. Whenever you drop a chest, fall to the ground to retrieve its contents. In the next area, there are five torches which create stepping stones. All five must be let for the steps to form the correct shape. Approach the statue of Reharl, then obey his instruction to wait. Your reward is a scroll.

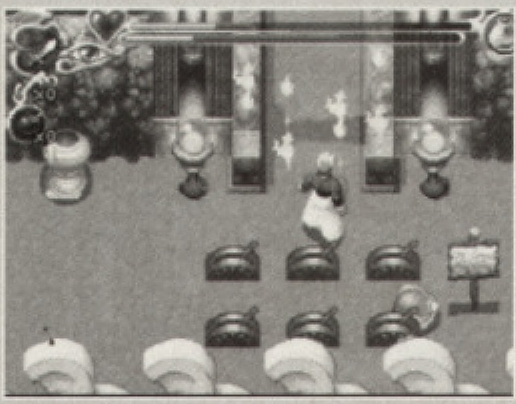
Travel left where a darkness orb is revealed. The scroll used in conjunction with this and the bow is on the top right of this screen, past three sparks. Summon Brass and use his sound wave to neutralise these as you jump over. Walk now onto the half-complete bridge and remove the thorn by shooting high arrows. The next screen has a key hidden on a sky island and two doors. Ignore the one on the left. The wooden door leads to a room of moving platforms. To activate

these you will have to shoot the thorn with darkness arrows, but a single shot won't do. You must fire a wide shot by pressing right, left, right then fire. On the next screen, go to the top and open the door that connects you to the beginning of the sky shrine. Now have all the cylinders swallowed by Bawu and light the torches to create a bridge to the left. In the next room use bawu on the crack, but there's also a hidden chest!



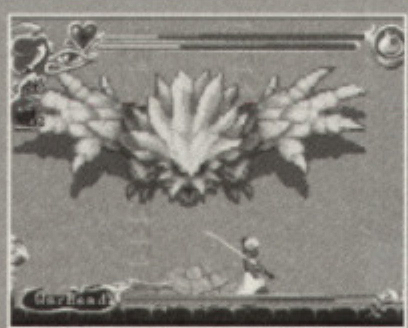
You will arrive at six switches. The legend on the sign is confusing, this is the sequence; bottom middle, top middle, top right, bottom left, bottom right, top left. Make sure the robots are facing towards the switches before completing the sequence. Behind the door, there's a darkness gem hidden in the left waterfall. The next chamber requires you to jump on a switch in the bottom right corner to open a door. Blow out the torch to remove the flame barrier on the bridge. Fight to uncover a green orb which lets your sword destroy all five grey pillars which seal the main door north. Remember to take the moving platform across the sky top right — there's a hidden chest on the island. In this area, the creatures will all succumb to the rod of purification.





15. SKY BOSS

Not as difficult as first appears. First, be tooled up with the earth sword — and have Bawu with you for top ups. Avoid the boss in its flying phase, wait until it lands. Then strike, reducing the size of the rock until the vulnerable part — a pulsing red core — is exposed. As it nears death, this core will spark into electric life, creating an added problem.



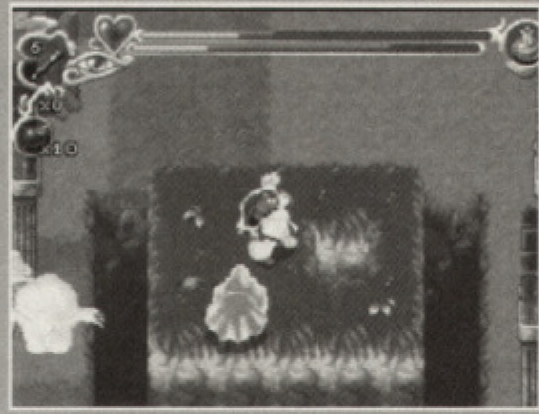
16. THE MOUSE HOLE

Under the bush in the square with the 'wait' statue is a switch which will drop a green chest which contains two shrinking herbs. With these you can duck through the mousehole to the right. It's difficult, as you start to grow quickly. Take a powerful spirit like Efreet down with you. Don't try to enter the hole until one mouse has emerged. Inside the hole, kill every mouse to reveal a chest, and every mouse in the pool area. Take Dytto and snuff out the torch for more enemies. There's little more in here.

17. SKY RIDING

With Airl, you will be able to reach certain point previously inaccessible, like.

1. Chamber before Sky Boss.
There is an island on the left hand side reached by riding on Airl from the left most platform in the room.
2. Valley of Death. The unreachable platform with the thorn can now be by riding from the bridge platform.
3. Sky Shrine puppet.
Ride north from the puppet to find a secret diamond.



4. Above Sound Shrine.
In the 'colloseum' area ride to a centrally located platform.
5. Above Fire Shrine.
Across the large black area to the rear of the shrine to find a puppet.
6. Earth Shrine.
The open space west of the river with a puppet. Fly north to the unreachable hill.

18. CHEST BUSTING

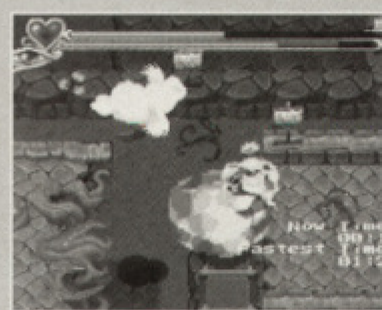
Airl's electrical attack is the only thing to destroy iron boxes. These are dotted all over the landscape, including; 1. Sky shrine, in waterfall; 2. Entrance to Sound Shrine; 3. On roof of village hit 4; On terrace near Fire Shrine; 5. Sky Shrine, far right at second save point. 6. Earth Shrine. On the platform near the bridge made of three tiles. 7. Darkness Shrine, eletrical room.

19. RIVER SOURCE

There is a series of caves located at the source of the river, which you may only enter by having Airl light the electric bulbs at the entrance. Proceed through the first chamber by breaking the stone pillars on the bottom right. At the lower level go to the left and you will find a 'herb garden'. Pick the shrinking herbs and go through the gap to the north.

20. THE ASSAULT COURSE

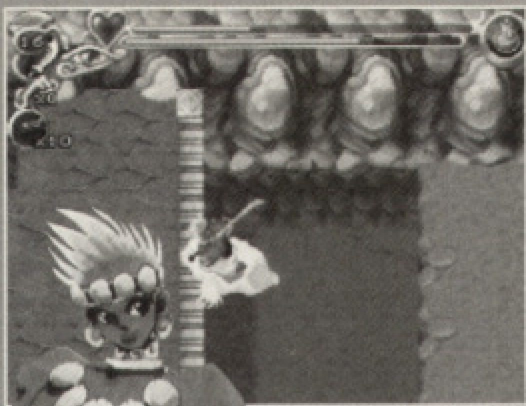
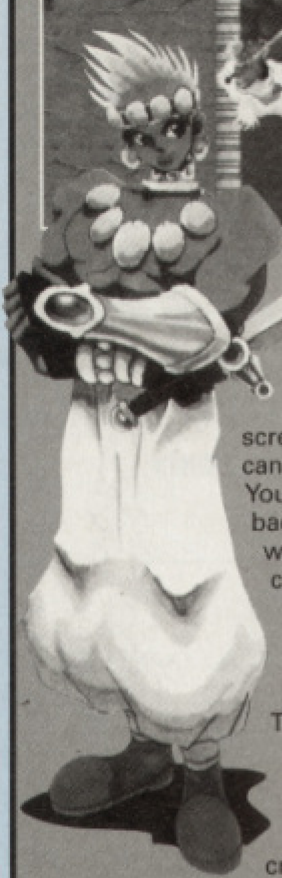
This 'extra' room can only be entered once you have the wind rod. It requires you to backtrack, using the warp hole just outside the village which takes you to the sound shrine. There is a thorn on the south side of the room filled with electric sparks. Beyond it, a short corridor ending in a steel wall and a pot, which the rod can push onto a switch, opening the way to the assault course. The object is to propel a rock through the course in the least possible time, resulting in a performance-related bonus. The best policy is to ride the rock, using the wind rod to propel it. Good luck.



21. AGITO'S LAIR

You have the six spirits, you are ready to face Agito. Use the warp pad to take you to the room in the water shrine with the thorn. Use the crystal to summon shade and remove the thorn. In the next screen summon the air spirit to cross the gap. In the following screen Shade can help you locate a hidden chest. The next screen has you jumping a wide chasm, collecting a key and taking it to a door to the lower level. Below, head straight for the screen to the right, accessible from the stairs. Fill up your energy bars and summon airl (there is a gas fissure to the right of the energy spot). The annoying tentacle creatures can be removed with a single arrow of darkness. Now light all the bulbs using Airl's electric dash attack. With the chest concealed behind the torch, summon Efreet and use his fire breath to blow out the flame. At the top of the screen the door will open into a room with a thorn that holds the key.

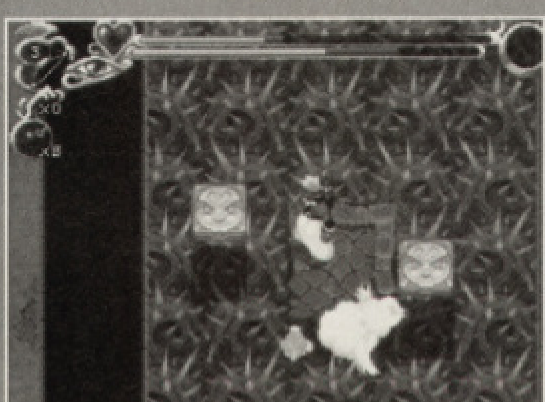
Walk back to the initial room on this level. There is a bulb on the left (also a ledge on the top of the screen with good power up goodies. Lighting the bulb removes the first door. To use your key, you will have to propel the large robot, using Airl's electric attacks to power

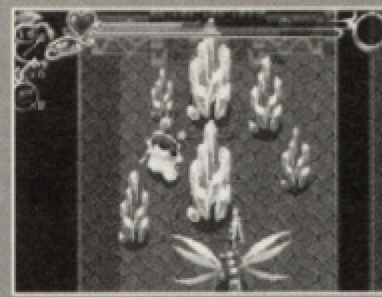
it. Once through the door, power up your bow with the orb in the chest. Ignore the thorn in next room. Take Airl instead into the spike room. Sidestep the heavies in the hallway and jump across the islands to the step in the middle of the room. Use Airl to take you to the bush. Summon Bawu and have him empower your sword. You can break the stone pillars. Summon Brass from the mortar barrels to break the crystals. Go down and immediately left to a screen with several thorns on a mezzanine. You can summon Shade from the dead spirits. You'll find a gas jet. Summon Airl and take her back to the mortar room, then left to a room with a puppet. Ignore that, just get on the cloud and fly north. There's the most powerful rod (level 3) within your grasp. Summon Brass from the puppet on the way out. Go right, down and right where there are two passages leading off the top of the screen. The right hand one has crystals, one hiding a useful save point. Return to the thorn room. Now cross to the opposite mezzanine on Airl and have her light the bulb. Summon Bawu and climb on the robot. There's a crack that Bawu can open, creating a water jet. Before you dispense with Bawu, have him empowee your sword. Use Dytto to remove the fire and then use Dytto's vortex to make short work of the gargoyles. In the next room sidestep the knight and break the stone with your sword. Through the door you need to push a stone to get access to the platform with the bombers. Near here is the most powerful sword of all. Return to the room with the thorns. On the large mezzanine is a jumpgrass which leads to a scroll. Also, get Bawu to empower your sword. Go to the right — a new area. There is a gold pillar you can now destroy for a key. Summon Dytto and take the left hand passage. You can reach the higher level by freezing a rat and jumping on it.



Once again back to the thorn room. Leave by the bottom right exit. You have a key to take you down. On the lower floor, Dytto comes in handy by freezing enemies allowing you to reach the higher level. Collect the keys. Now Summon Brass and shatter the crystals bottom right. Ignore the bushes — go for the Angel bow instead! (level 3). Now take out the third bush down on the right side. Electrify the robot and get a key. There's a switch on the right side creating a bridge to a scroll. Next screen there is the most powerful Hell Bomb locked up. The key is hidden on the central stone platform you will need to jump to. Use your empowered rod on the 'Koh' which frees a treasure spirit, who can be summoned from chests and will add his defensive powers to your other spirits.



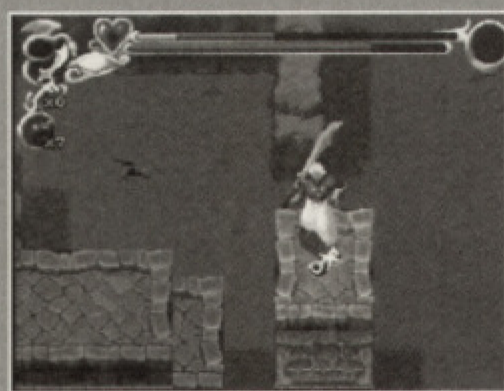
Return to the first room on this level. Leave by the top exit. In the next room a key stands on a central pillar. Leave by the top exit, destroy all the guards, freeze the water spouts and take a key. North again, to find the scroll of the wind rod — excellent! Return to the room with doors on left and right. The right side first, using the wind rod. Push the sleeping mouse onto the door pressure pad. In the next room, a key will retrieve a scroll/pearl. There's another pearl in the screen after that, plus Bawu can find a key from the crack.



Your wind rod can push the sparks in the following screen into the robot. It will also push the iron balls. You come to a room with five orbs. Use the orb of darkness to power your arrows, and select Dytto as a spirit. Your arrows quickly disperse the initial wave of tentacles in the next room, and Dytto deals well with much else. Return to the left hand side of the big room which leads to imprisoned villagers, well worth freeing. The warp takes you to the stairway to this level

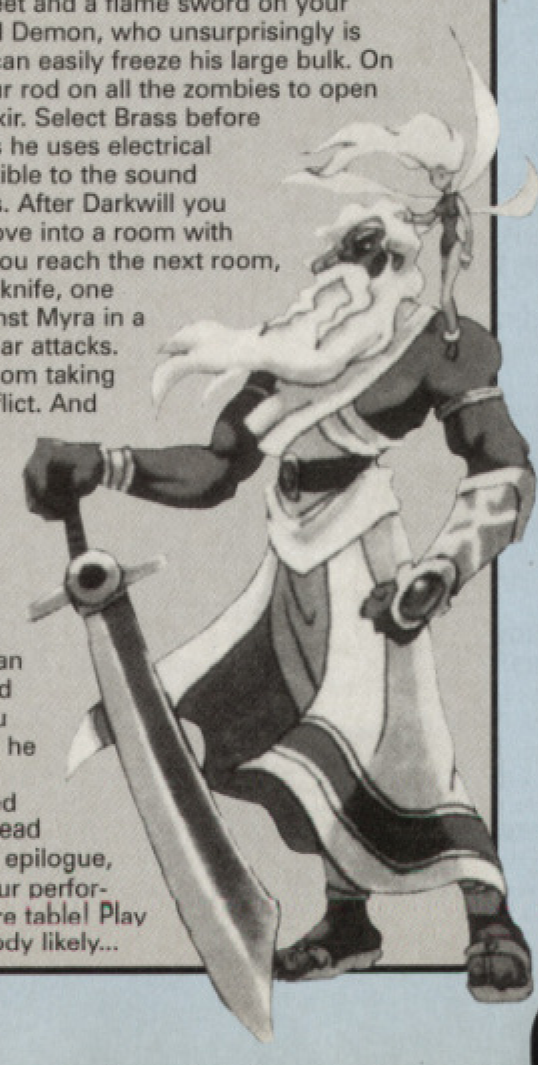


Now remove the thorns from the leftmost part of this level. Use the wind rod to push the iron ball in the next screen, as a means to the higher platforms on the right. There is a jumpgrass taking you to the further reaches of this room. In the wall near the crystal is a gap. Go through this, there is a pearl nearby. Blow out the torches. In the next screen, stand on the rock with the wind rod and use it to propel the rock leftward. The next set of screens pose big monsters, be prepared. In the final screen before the tower, look for two small cracks that Bawu can exploit.



22. AGITO'S TOWER

Before you confront Agito, a series of boss encounters, each of which has a tactical weakness. First is Bluearm, easily overcome with Efreet and a flame sword on your sword. Next is the fat Red Demon, who unsurprisingly is weak against Dytto who can easily freeze his large bulk. On the next level up, use your rod on all the zombies to open a bonus room with an elixir. Select Brass before entering Darkwill's lair. As he uses electrical attacks, he's very susceptible to the sound spirit's microwave attacks. After Darkwill you can fall from the floor above into a room with two extra scrolls. When you reach the next room, Brass will become a new knife, one which you must use against Myra in a series of well-timed circular attacks. Nothing now stops you from taking on Agito for the final conflict. And what an anti-climax that is. Agito throws all kinds of spirit attack at you, but the key to beating him is using the magic power symbol he carelessly has placed in his lair. Every so often he releases a blue water dragon, you can summon Dytto from it and replenish your health. You must vary your attacks or he will construct a shield for that spirit type — indicated by its colour. Once he's dead you're treated to an story epilogue, and then a ranking for your performance — and a high-score table! Play that again? That'll be bloody likely...



FIGHTING VIPERS MOVES AND SECRETS

This is one of the biggest titles to be imported over to the Saturn this year. Mean Machines Sega thought that a handy moves guide would come in handy for all you combateers out there.

KEY:

g = guard
p = punch
k = kick
f = forward
b = back
u = up
d = down
+ = press buttons simutaneously
(When an UPPER case letter is listed, this indicates that the position must be held)

Crouch: When crouching.
Back: If facing the opponent's back.
Toward: Facing toward an opponent.
Air: When in the air.
Wall: Near a wall.

BREAK OFF ARMOUR:
Every character has the ability to break off their own armour by pressing (f, b, f, b + P+G+K) at the start of each match. This will give your opponent an excellent handicap, this is only advised to executed by experienced player's only.

RAXEL

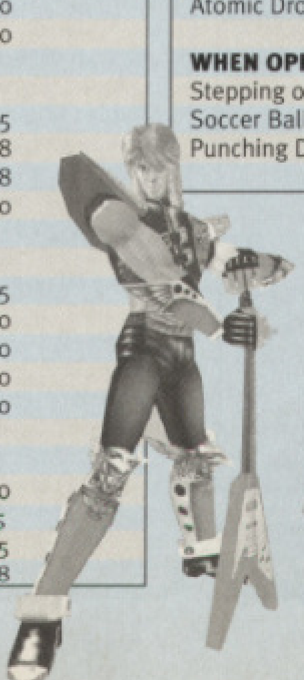
Stage: THE CITY TOWER

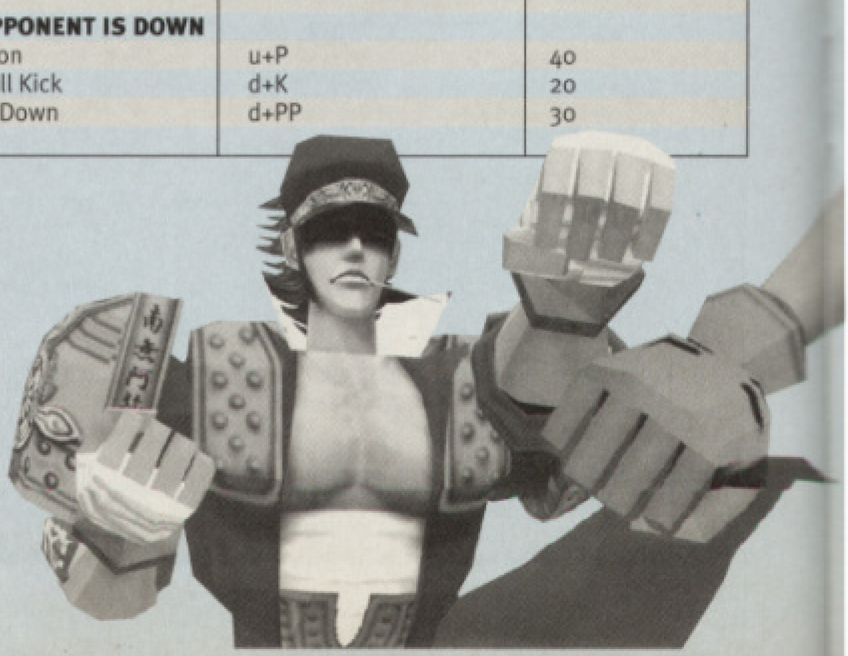
MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
1-2 Punch	PP	34
Punch Combo	PPP	52
Punch & Kick	PK	32
Uppercut	d/f P	35
Double Upper	d/f PP	45
Elbow	f P	19
Elbow & Punch	f PP	41
Light Hand	f PPP	60
Elbow Side-Kick	f PK	44
Elbow Side-K & Knuckle	f PKP	50
Elbow Death Spin Kick	F PKPK+G	82
Elbow Low Death Spin	f PKPd K+G	79
Double Spin Kick	KK	45
Rising Spin Kick	(Crouch)K	30
Side-Kick	d/f K	35
Side Kick Knuckle	d/f KP	42
Death Spin Combo	d/f KPf K+G	60
Low Death Spin Combo	d/f KPd K+G	58
Hammer Kick	f K	39
Sommersault Kick	u/b K	50
Vertical Kick	K+G	42
Sliding Kick	d K+G	36
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Guitar Trust	f f P	50
Guitar Swing	d/f d/f P	34
Guitar Swing Down	d/f d/f PP	60
Death Spin Kick	f K+G	50
Double Death Spin	f K+Gd d/f f K	68
Triple Death Spin	f K+Gd d/f f Kd d/f f K	100
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Baster	b K	30
Guard & Uppercut	b P	20
Combo Block Baster	PPK	40
RUNNING MOVES		
Running Straight	(RUN)P	35
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	48
Running Knee	(RUN)K	38
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	40
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	35
Neck Fold	b f P+G	50
Neck Throw	f f P+G	30
Mexican Typhoon	u d P+G	60
Back Drop	(Back)P+G	70
DOWNED OPPONENT		
Stepping on	u+P	30
Guitar Crash	d+P	15
Double Handed Guitar	d d+P	45
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	28

BAHN

Stage: OLD ARMSTONE CITY

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
Kenkaka	D/F P	36
Sway Elbow	b P	30
Iron Elbow	f P	28
Running Elbow	f f P	45
Combo Elbow	f f Pf P	50
Rising Uppercut	f d d/f P	48
Rising Upper Combo	f d d/f Pf d d/f P	100
Yakuza Kick	d/f K	30
Hi-Kick	f f K	35
Head Attack	P+K+G	45
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Jingi Gekitouha	d/b D/F P	33
Super Straight	F+P	35
Body Check	b f f P+K	50
Elbow & Body Check	f f Pb f P+K	60
COUNTER MOVES		
Guard & Elbow	b P	30
Guard & Uppercut	b d/f d d/b P	50
Guard & Rising Upper	b d/f d d/b PP M	45
RUNNING MOVES		
Running Straight	(RUN)P	45
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	50
Run & Body Check	(RUN)P+K	48
Running Knee	(RUN)K	40
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	35
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	30
Throw Down	b P+G	30
Head Butt	b f P+K+G	50
Atomic Drop	(Back)P+G Back	100
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Stepping on	u+P	40
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	20
Punching Down	d+PP	30





GRACE

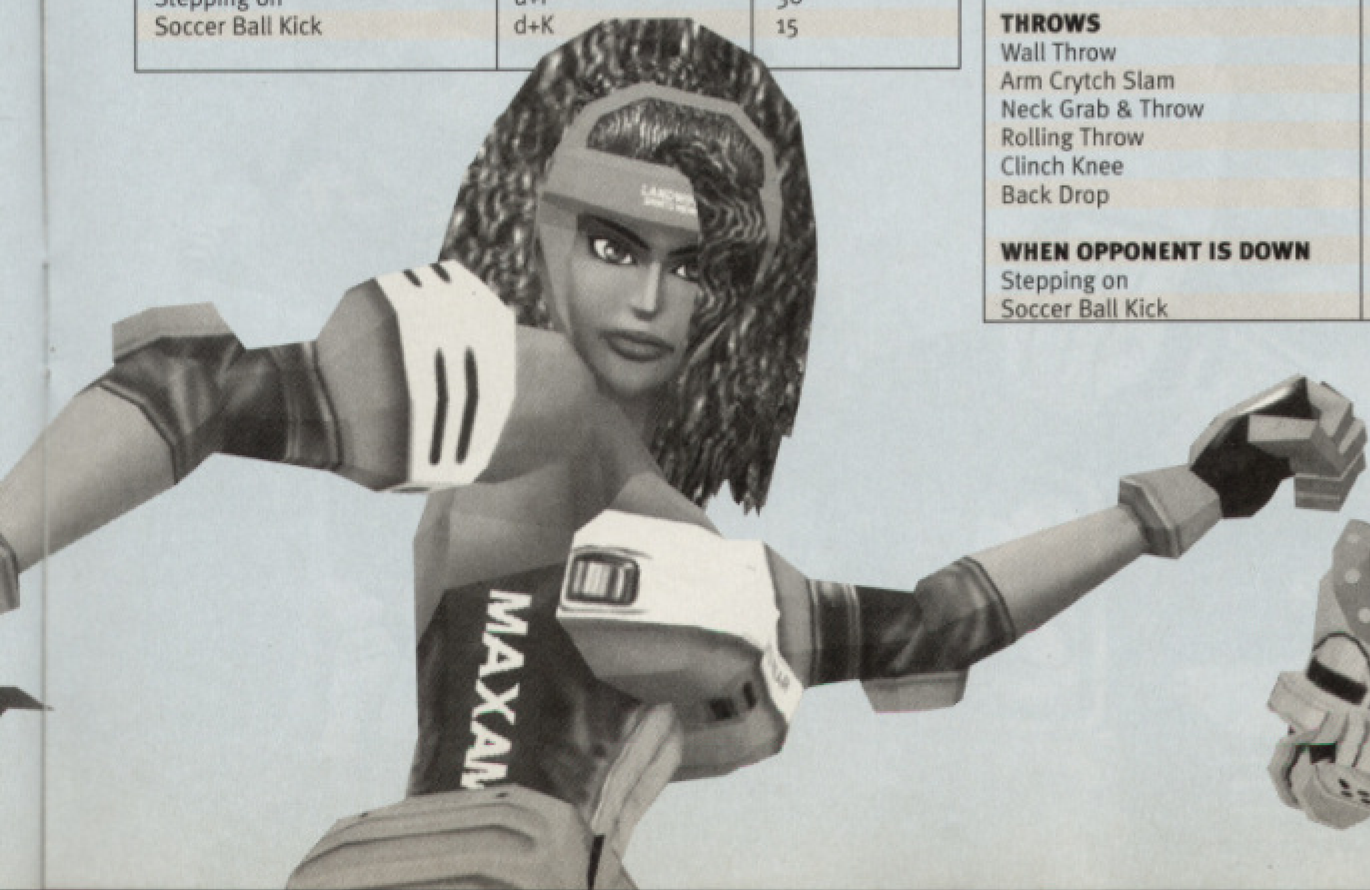
Stage: BIG FACTORY

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
Single Beat	P	12
Duel Beat	PP	20
Quad Beat	PPPP	36
Vulcan Beat	PPPPP	44
Punch & Kick	PK	32
Punch Crouch Spin	P d K	32
Punch Double Kick	PKK	45
Low Punch & Kick	d PK	35
Hi-Kick Straight	KP	42
KP & Hi-Kick	KPK	50
KP & Double Kick	KPKK	60
KP & Crouch Spin	KPd K	45
Double Kick	KK	45
Vulcan Leg	bKK	45
Camel Spin	d/f KK	26
Camel Spin Cutter	d/f KKK	46
Somersault Kick	u/b K	50
Front Roll Kick	u K	30
Jumping Front Roll	u/f K	30
Vertical Kick	d/f d/f K	35
Blade Cutter	u d K	30
Right Hi-Kick	K+G	20
Right Hi-Kick Left	K+GK	41
Right Hi-Kick Combo	K+GKK	76
Crouch Spin	d K+G	20
Crouch Sipn Combo	d K+GKKKK	86
Bit Kick	f K+G	35
Ballerina Kick	f K+GK	73
Level Back Chop	P+K	28
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Tip Slap	f f P	35
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Baster	b K	25
Guard & Tip Slap	b P	30
Combo Block Baster	PPK	35
Kick Combo Block Baster	KPKK	45
RUNNING MOVES		
Straight Punch	(RUN)P	65
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	40
Diving Kick	(RUN)K	40
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d K	40
Diving Front Roll Kick	(RUN)K+G	40
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	50
Izori	d b P+G	50
Cross Arm Crutch Slam	f b P+K+G	55
Frankensteiner	(Air)d P+K+G	35
Back Drop	(Back)P+G	80
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Stepping on	u+P	30
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	15

TOKIO

Stage: ARMSTONE AIRPORT

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
1-2 Punch	PP	30
Open Arm	PPP	40
1-2 & Kick	PPK	38
Punch & Kick	PK	36
Uppercut	d/f P	35
Open Arm Blow	f PP	35
Open Arm Blow	f PPP	48
Toe Kick	(Crouch)K	25
Middle Kick	d/f K	35
Double Middle Kick	d/f KK	45
Triple Middle Kick	d/f KKf K	50
Knee Kick	f K	30
Hi-Kick	f f K	35
Looping Kick	u/b K	45
Heel Attack	u d K	40
Spin Kick	K+G	42
Spin-K & Side	K+GK	45
Spin Float	K+GKK	60
Spin Cossack	K+Gd K	50
Low Spin Hi	d K+GK	45
Low Spin Float	d K+GKK	55
Triple Low Spin	D K+GKK	58
Middle Kick	d/f K+G	38
Middle Kick Combo	d/f K+Gf K	48
Catapult Hi	f K+GK	55
Catapult Low	f K+Gd K	60
Hi-K Punch & Kick	KPK	25
Hi-K 1-2 & Kick	KPPK	36
Hi-K 1-2 & Loop Kick	KPPb K	48
Hi-K PPP Hi-K	KPPPK	50
Hi-K PPP Low-K	KPPPd K	55
Hi-K PPP Loop-K	KPPPb K	55
Low-K Punch & Kick	d K+GPK	48
Low-K 1-2 & Kick	d K+GPPK	55
Low-K 1-2 & Loop Kick	d K+GPPb K	55
Low-K PPP Hi-K	d K+GPPPK	65
Low-K PPP Low-K	d K+GPPPd K	70
Low-K PPP Loop-K	d K+GPPPb K	68
Crouch down	f d P+K+G	35
Crouch Down & Kick	f d P+K+GK	46
Tokio Flash	f b f b P+K+G	50
ARMOUR BREAKER		
See Counter Move		
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Baster	b K	40
RUNNING MOVES		
Running Straight	(RUN)P	38
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	45
Drop Kick	(RUN)K	40
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	48
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	50
Arm Crytch Slam	f b P+G	60
Neck Grab & Throw	b P+G	45
Rolling Throw	f b P+K+G	50
Clinch Knee	(Wall)b f K	45
Back Drop	(Back)P+G Back	80
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Stepping on	u+P	30
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	20





SANMAN
Stage: OLD ARMSTONE TOWN

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
1-2 Punch	PP	28
1-2 Hammer	PPP	58
Jab Uppercut	Pd/f P	40
Jab Upper & Kick	Pd/f PK	48
Punch & Kick	PK	28
Uppercut	d/f P	30
Double Upper	d/f PP	40
Chop	b f P	20
Double Chop	b f PP	40
Triple Chop	b f PPP	60
Generator	f PP	36
Generator	f PPP	56
Generator	f PPPP	72
Generator Punch	f PPPPP	92
Body Press	U/B or U or U/F P	60
Reverse Sledge Hammer	d/f P+G	27
Leg Through	d K+G	30
Peach Bomber	P+K+G	40
Double Peach Bomber	P+K+GP+K+G	80
Hammer Down	d P+K+G	45
Double Hammer Down	d P+K+Gd P	50
Hammer & Reverse Sledge	d P+K+Gd P+G	6
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Elbow Smash	f f P	35
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Bomber	b K	35
Combo Block Bomber	PPK	45
RUNNING MOVES		
Body Attack	(RUN)P	30
Peach Press	(RUN)K	35
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	45
THROWS		
Sanman Nice Can	P+G	30
Giant Swing	b d/b d d/f f P	50
Neck Hanging Tree	f d/f d d/b b P+G	50
Triple Neck Hang	f d/f d d/b b P+Gf b P+G	60
Sanman Typhoon		
f d/f d d/b b P+Gf b P+Gf d/f d d/b b u/b u u/f f P+G		100
Bear Hug	f b P+G	50
Bear Hug & Press	f b P+Gb b P+G	68
Canadian Back Breaker	f b P+K+G	70
Pile Driver	d/f d/f P+G	80
Super Power Bomb	(Wall)f b f P+G	40
Iron Claw	(Wall)d/b or d P+G	48
Double Neck Hang	d b f P+G	55
Back Drop	(Back)P+G Back	80
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Raiden Drop	u+P	35
Shiko Quake	d+K	20

JANE
Stage: OBSERVATION DECK

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
Double Bash	PP	34
Low Spin Combo	PPd K	64
Low Spin & Uppercut	PPd Kd/f P	70
Low Spin & Double Hand	PPd Kf P	78
Knee Kick Combo	PPf K	45
Triple Bash	PPP	40
Punch & Kick	PK	35
Punch Kick & Uppercut	PKP	45
Crouch Jab & Kick	d PK	35
Uppercut	d/f P	28
Body Blow	f P	36
Body Blow & Punch	f PP	40
Double Hand Attack	d d/f f P(d/b f P)	45
Rising Kick	(Crouch)K	25
Rising Knee	(Crouch)f k	36
Low Spin Up	d K+GK	40
Low Spin Down	D K+GK	40
Wall Climbing	(Wall, Air)u u P	0
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Power Smash	f f P	35
Tornado Punch	b d/b d d/f f P	65
Ground Tornado	f d d/f P	60
Jumping Heel Drop	(Top of Wall)u P	45
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Straight	b P	38
Combo Block Straight	PPb P	48
RUNNING MOVES		
Running Straight	(RUN)P	30
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	42
Running Knee	(RUN)K	30
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	48
THROWS		
Clinch Punch	P+G	35
Clinch Punch	P+GP	40
Brain Baster	b P+G	48
Front Back Breaker	f d P+G	50
Clinch Knee	K+G	35
Clinch Knee	b d/b d d/f f K+G	45
Clinch Knee	(Wall)K+GK+G	58
Neck Fold	(Back)P+G Back	70
Tiger Suprex	(Back)P+K+G Back	75
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Jumping Punch	u+P	35
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	20
Punching Down	d+P	25





CANDY

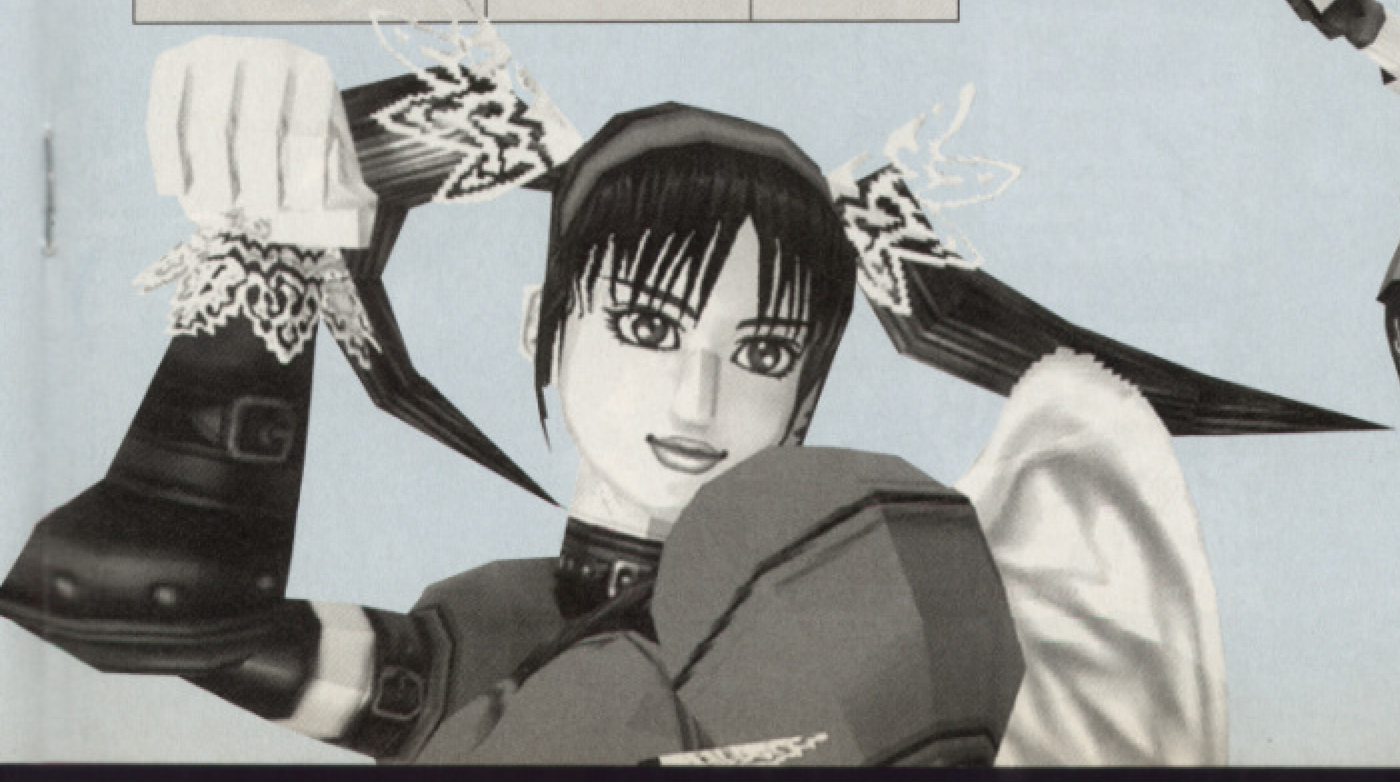
Stage: BAY SIDE

MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
Cat Punch	PP	28
Punch & Kick	PK	32
Cat Scratch	PPP	44
Combo Upper Kick	PPPK	79
Combo Low Kick	PPPd K	62
Crouch Jab & Kick	d PK	40
Cat Uppercut	d/f P	33
Honey Single	f P	24
Honey Double	f PP	35
Honey Triple	f PPP	45
Rising Cat Upper	f d d/f P	40
Toe Kick	(Crouch)K	23
Toe Kick & Scorpion	(Crouch)KK	31
Toe Kick & Somersault	(Crouch)Ku/b K	42
Toe Kick & Heel Down	(Crouch)KK+G	55
Crouch Kick	d/b KK	29
Leg Beat	d/b KKK	38
Crouch Kick & Punch	d/b KKd P	49
Middle Kick	d K	24
Middle Kick & High	d KK	35
Triple Low Kick	D KKK	48
Scorpion Attack	d/f K	30
Somersault Kick	u/b K	45
Jack Knife Kick	K+G	40
Horse Kick	f f K+G	42
Honey Peach	P+K+G	50
Honey Peach & Peach	P+K+GP+K+G	59
Wall Climbing	(Wall, Air)u u P	0
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Cat Slap	f f P	35
Cat Diving	d/f d/f P	35
Cat Heel Drop	(Top of Wall)u P	40
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Bomber	b K	35
Guard & Cat Slap	b P	35
RUNNING MOVES		
Running Straight	(RUN)P	30
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	42
Peach Press	(RUN)K	50
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	45
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	42
Peach Press	d/b f P+G	80
Cat Flip	d b P+G	46
Hopping	u/f P	35
Leg Through	d P+K+G	40
Honey Aerial	(Air)b P+K+G	60
Back Drop	(Back)P+G Back	70
Knee Trap	(Back)P+K+G	80
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Stepping on	u+P	30
Soccer Ball Kick	d+K	20
Cat Play	d+PPPPP	35

PICKY

Stage: UFO DINER

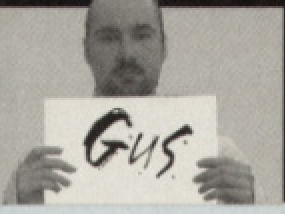
MOVES LIST	CONTROL METHOD	DAMAGE
1-2 Punch	PP	36
1-2 Side Kick	PPK	56
Combo Toe Kick Hi	PPd KK	66
Combo Upper Spin	PPf PK	66
Combo Knee Kick	PPf KK	55
Board Bash	PPP	60
Punch Side Kick	PK	58
Punch Low Kick	Pd K	43
Crouch Jab & kick	d PK	40
Uppercut	d/f P	35
Upper Hi-Spin	d/f PK	45
Knee Kick High	KK	40
Toe Kick	d K	38
Toe Kick High	d KK	46
Middle Kick	d/f K	45
Heel Attack	u d K	42
Knee Kick	K+G	46
Rising Knee	(Crouch)f K+G	50
Rocket Dive	(Back to Wall)d/b KK	45
Wall Climing	(Wall, Air)u u P	0
ARMOUR BREAKER		
Board Slap	b f f P	50
Jumping Heel Drop	(Top of Wall)u P	42
COUNTER MOVES		
Block Knee	b K	35
Sway Uppercut	b P	35
RUNNING MOVES		
BoardSlap	(RUN)P	40
Shoulder Tackle	(RUN)P+G	52
Running Air	(RUN)P+K+G	60
Running Knee	(RUN)K	35
Sliding Kick	(RUN)d or d/f K	42
THROWS		
Wall Throw	P+G	30
Neck Throw	f f P+G	45
Hopping	u/f P	42
Leg Through	d P+K+G	0
Leg Through & Horse Kick	d P+K+Gb K	30
Clinch Knee	(Wall)b f K	30
Air Grab	(Air)b P+K+G	45
Frankensteiner	(Air)d P+K+G	50
Back Drop	(Back)P+G Back	60
WHEN OPPONENT IS DOWN		
Diving	u+P	35
Board Stamp	d+P	30
Triple Stamp	d+KKK	45

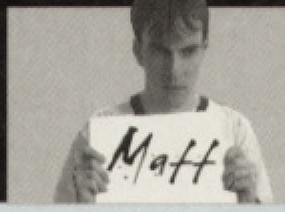




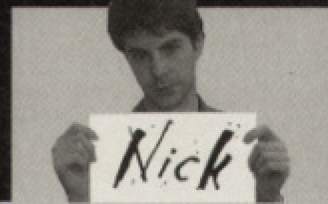
MEAN MAIL

Everyone gets a chance to have their say in MEAN MAIL. Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!
Write to: MENACING MAIL, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU









I EAT RPG FOR BREAKFAST

Dear Mean Mail,

I don't know about you but I was a bit disappointed with Shining Wisdom. I thought it was a top notch title but I'd completed it within seven days without any help from mags with 85% of items. So I went down to Electronics Boutique (where I'd bought the game) and the dudes and dudettes let me exchange it for Rally. What is your fastest time in Championship Arcade Mode?

Yours, '.

Mat England, Romsey

MATT:What's my fastest time in arcade mode? Something completely unbelievable that no one could ever match.
STEPHEN:Shining Wisdom's an RPG I know that much. I only play Sega Rally in pubs and I'm too pissed to know what my time is.
GUS:Well, I've played both, and I was distinctly let down by the lack of magical items in Sega Rally. I'm impressed by your knowledge of Saturn RPGs, Steve. Bit of a crash course needed there, I think.
MATT:Can I leave you guys to answer the letters.
GUS:No, the point is that everyone does it.

THE VOICE OF FINAL DOOM

Dear Mean Mail,

I'm a PSX owner, you might wonder why I'm writing to a stinking Sega mag then. Just to tell you lot to get down to the job centre pronto, because Sega and the Saturn are finished. Look at the facts - there are three times as many of us (PSX owners) than you rejects (Saturn owners) and our ranks are growing daily. The PlayStation mags say the shops are selling 8 PlayStations for every Saturn, and that people bring back their Sega machines in a few weeks and beg the shop to exchange them for a PlayStation. In my sixth form, a few of the lads have PSX's but only one has a Saturn, and strangely enough, he's the one who smells and always seems to have dog cack on his shoes. Anyway, Sega will get creamed this Christmas, dump the Saturn and leave you guys looking for employment in 1997. Happy hunting.

yours,

PSX lover, Worthing

STEPHEN:I've got both machines and I think they're both great, what's the problem?
GUS:The problem is not PlayStations, but PlayStation owners. They are a particular breed. They all had Amigas once and were ashamed to admit it. Now they can buy games like Worms with dignity. Matt, you came from a PlayStation mag, didn't you?
MATT:Yeah. I just think it's really sad. You should buy the machine because you love the games, not because you're some sort of corporate arse-licker. PSX is a great 3-D machine, Saturn's a great 2-D machine, best of both worlds.
GUS:Er, the views expressed are not those of Sega and all that. Matt you've got to toe the party line here. There's nothing wrong with corporate arse-licking, as long as the bum belongs to Sonic.
STEPHEN:I refuse to get drawn into this pointless debate.

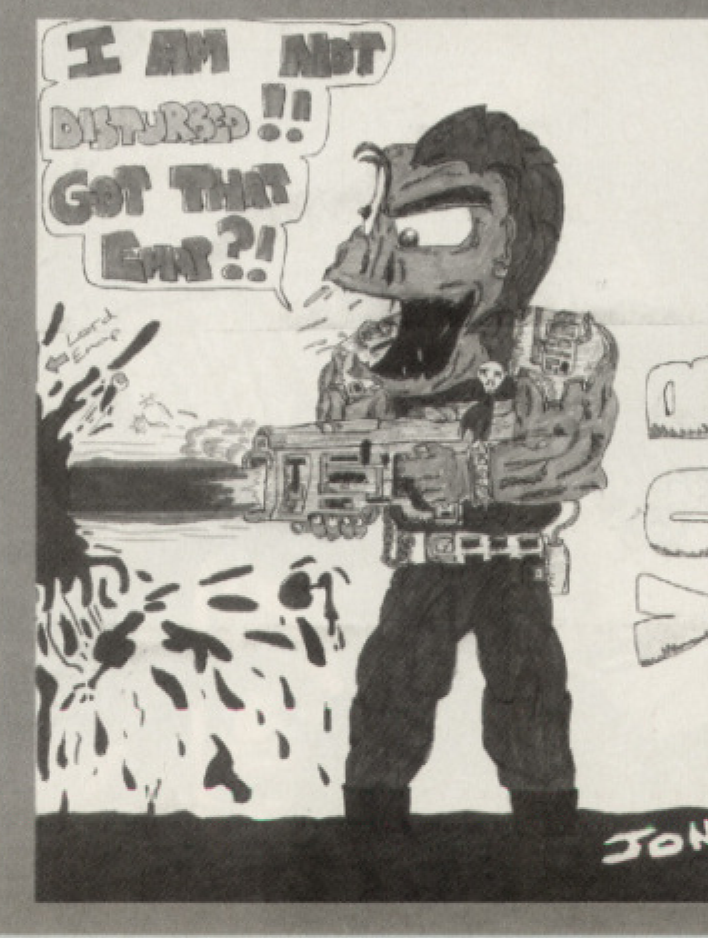
TECHNICAL HITCH

My mate and I were debating Sony vs Saturn, and after a heated discussion, he would only settle for him and I writing to our fave mags to confirm our argument. I was in a certain Dixon shop and overheard a Sony PS owner really cheesed off. To cut a long story short, he complained that his Sony (and a lot of others) would freeze during a game. This is the second time, he said, and this was a reconditioned one. I am certain that this guy is going to the Saturn side of life. My friend does not believe me and said if he had phoned Sony themselves he would get a brand new one within days.

yours,
James McIntosh, Greenock.

MATT:Well, F1 has come to mind for me. The game is horrendously bugged — Psygnosis have had loads of calls about it crashing during games. As for freezing, well that's just shoddy manufacturing, heh heh.
GUS:See you've got into the arse-licking quite easily Matt. It must be that new Saturn that's just arrived.
STEPHEN:I've had no trouble with my second-hand PlayStation, but I must admit loading times are slow.
GUS:Yes, when you compare the likes of Alien Trilogy, or Space Hulk. The loading time is like 30 seconds.
STEPHEN:And Street Fighter Alpha.

MEAN ART





Yoh 'goes mental' according to Jon O'Neill of Northern Ireland

CAPCOM CONSPIRACY

Dear Mean Mail,

Why, oh why, oh why, oh why, etc. etc. do you continue to give all the SNK beat-'em-ups bad reviews? Granted all the CD only games are pretty poor and should never have reached the Saturn but King of Fighters '95 and Fatal Fury Real Bout are excellent beat-'em-ups that every fighting fan should have. Both are more original and better in terms of gameplay than Street Fighter Zero ever was. The multi character abilities of King of Fighters, the sheer number of different characters it has as well as arcade players gameplay make it a classic beat-'em'up. All my Saturn friends have a copy of King of Fighters '95 and a few have Fatal Fury Real Bout as well and we all play them to death and erm... none of us have the sad looking SF Zero or X-Men. Granted Vampire Hunter and SF Zero 2 are good games but you shouldn't have orgasms over them. It seems to me that if the game doesn't have the magic words Capcom or Street Fighter "Flogging a dead horse edition" in them you will automatically mark the games down. I've come to the conclusion that either the Capcom PR girlie is doing her job too well or the SNK PR girlie isn't giving in to your sick demands.
I hope you will re-review King of Fighters '95 and Fatal Fury Real Bout without the Capcom PR girlie kneeling under your desk, to give the games a fairer and better review.

Yours,

Ryoga, Woking

MATT:Well SNK have always played second fiddle to Capcom, and I am a big fan of their games. King of Fighters '95 is better than '94, but so many of the characters are copies of each other that they bring it down, and now Capcom have shown what they can do with SF Zero 2, the stakes have been raised. I did think Samurai Shodown 2 was amazing, with lots of new gameplay twists, but SNK seem stuck in a rut at the moment.
STEPHEN:I know your real name is Barry.
GUS:Address?
STEPHEN:He works at Otaku. I must say I didn't enjoy KOF '95 that much. If he agrees not to have orgams over SNK beat 'em ups we won't do the same over Capcom's.
GUS:I'm sorry, but I think there is so much more to games than either of these companies offer. Capcom at least have some variation in their portfolio, but SNK have been chucking out nonsense for years and someone has to take a stand! Do either KOF or Real Bout offer something seriously original? Niet. I feel sorry for NEO GEO owners, I really do.
STEPHEN:I know Barry is quite proud of his Wondermega.
GUS:I bet he thinks we underrated Wonderdog. He should speak to Anonymous, Timewarpsville.

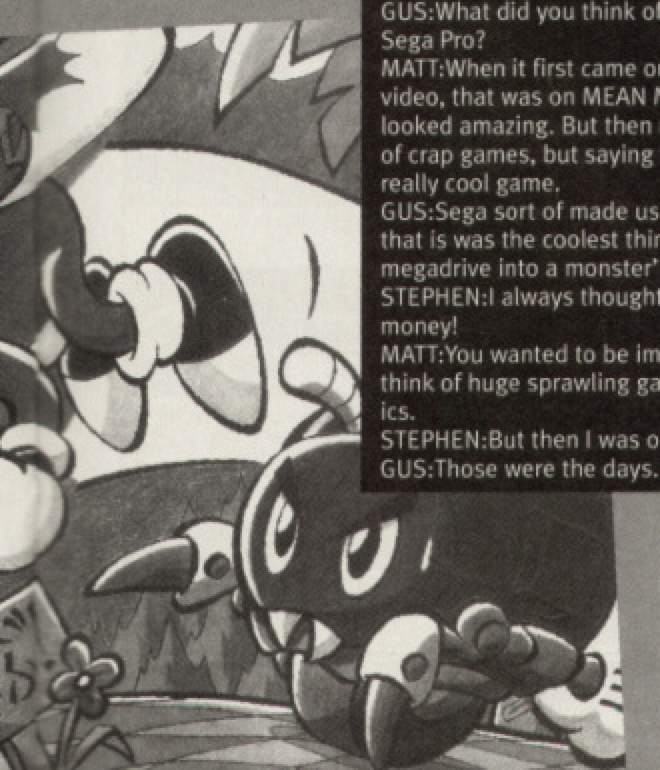
BEST LETTER

Dear Mean Mail,

I will get straight to the point and say why drown out the Mega-CD, it is a great console and you can get some decent games for it so why let the whole project go just because a few people complained. If a few people complained about the Saturn, will you poke fun and ignore it, the answer is (SURPRISE, SURPRISE) no.
You can also play music on it. I am very angry at this as I own a Mega-CD, true, some games don't use the system at all as they are upgraded Megadrive games, the graphics on these games remain the same but, some of them have very good audio and this is sometimes produced in a studio. So instead of criticising, try to produce a cartridge that would allow the Mega-CD owner to have access to films. The machine is able to produce some video on its own, so it should be no problem. The result might bring more sales of the machine, and as one mag said, "we now bring Sonic Spinball on the Megadrive". That was great but another said "The Megadrive had Sonic Spinball and its only natural that its little brother should play with the same toys". The Saturn has a video cartridge so its only fair that the Mega-CD has one.

Anonymous, Timewarpsville

STEPHEN:I think I've fallen asleep and woken in 1994.
MATT:The Mega-CD is NOT a next-generation machine. You shouldn't be disappointed, you should get some good deals on old games, but start living in the now.
GUS:What did you think of it when you worked on Sega Pro?
MATT:When it first came out, and I saw the preview video, that was on MEAN MACHINES actually, it looked amazing. But then reality sunk in with loads of crap games, but saying that Sonic CD is still a really cool game.
GUS:Sega sort of made us all pretend for a while that is was the coolest thing. Remember, 'turn your megadrive into a monster'?
STEPHEN:I always thought, God that's a lot of money!
MATT:You wanted to be impressed, you wanted to think of huge sprawling games and amazing graphics.
STEPHEN:But then I was only 15 when it came out.
GUS:Those were the days...



Natasha Murray of Tooting provided us with this top quality Tails/Badnik pic.

SANDRA BOL-LOCKS HERE...

Hi, I'm Sandra, San to me mates and I'm trapped in the NET. It's not so bad if you send me your E-mails and I'll pass them onto the lads to answer. We're using Gus' mailbox at the moment, (Gus-meansega@mail.U-net.com) so drop us a line. No filth mind, unless he ordered it from you.



YOB'S COLUMN

HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME OF THE DISGUSTING CORRESPONDENCE WE'VE RECEIVED THIS MONTH.

...seriously swerved are you with your mechanical marital aids and 3D arse cork accompanied by women's knickers...
John Collier, Surrey

Yob: No, seriously swerved are you, wasting a stamp to send me this complete drivel. I get more sense out of the inmates of the local happy house, somewhere I'm sure you're familiar with.

...if I ever come across you I'll deck you and kick you ***less. I'm not including my name and address because then you might think that you've got a friend and never stop asking me to boft you.
"Scot of the Anarchic", Glasgow

Yob: Are you sure you didn't include your address because you're scared that I'd come and punch your teeth so far down your throat that you'd have to gargle through your arse if you did?

...Our names are Jazz and Funk, the 'ardest boys in town...

Yob: Just stop it, it's not big and it's not clever.

...I think people would have a better time writing into the turd on your beach picture, since it probably has more of an I.Q. than you and a better dress sense...
C.P and J.R, no fixed abode.

:Yob: Write to the turd if you feel that way inclined. At least then you'd be writing to something that communicates on the same intellectual level as you. He's history anyway, now that I have this huge new erection to write from, fnar fnar.

DIRECTORY

This is The Directory. It's what we see as the Top 50 games available for your console, all worth getting. These are not the only worthy titles for the Saturn, but staying on this chart has an element of prestige.

The Directory will evolve with new releases which will force the lower echelons to drop off the end into gaming obscurity. Come back each month to see the effect of improving software. There will, of course, always be a place for classic games — titles like Sega Rally and NiGHTS should stay on the Directory for years to come.

You may notice changes in the ratings from back issues, and indeed the directory ratings may change. We make no apology for this — games are rated relatively, and no reviewer can quite tell after a week or so how a game will age. We've assessed all the directory titles as harshly and as realistically as we can. Sometimes we've made mistakes — we're human — and the directory is the place to rectify them. It's also a court of appeal for the underrated.

1 Virtua Fighter 2



By AM2. The sine qua non of 3D fighting games.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped : MM

96

2 NiGHTS



A breathtakingly original piece of action gaming from Sonic Team.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped : MM49/50

96

3 Sega Rally



An exquisite driving game and an awesome AM3 conversion.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped : MM42/43

95

4 Fighting Vipers



AM2's no-holds barred saucy brawl 'em up.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped : MM50

95

5 Exhumed



3D Egyptian Doom-fest of exceptionally rich game design.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped : MM

94

6 Streetfighter Alpha



Capcom's unparalleled and uncompromised arcade smash.

Reviewed: MM44
Tipped : MM45

94

7 Worldwide Soccer '97



Soccer in its most realistic and detailed form.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped : MM

93

8 Virtua Cop



Target-shooting gangster game with textbook playability.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped : MM

93

9 Actua Golf



Everything a golf gamer would want it to be.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped : MM

92

10 Bust-a-Move 2



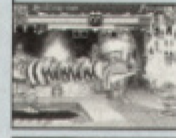
Incurably infectious simple puzzle gameplay for two.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped : MM

92

11 Night Warriors

Stunningly sharp 2D beat 'em up from Capcom.



Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM45

92

12 Olympic Soccer

Speed and action successfully emphasised.



Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM

92

13 Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

Comprehensive conversion that should please MK fanatics.



Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM48

91

14 Magic Carpet

Epic magical adventure, ingeniously assembled.



Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM

91

15 Thunderhawk 2

Stunning war action, excellent 3D graphics.



Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM39

91

16 Virtua Fighter Kids

Why? Don't ask, just play.



Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM50

91

17 Daytona USA

Flawed but landmark racing game. Immensely enjoyable.



Reviewed: MM32
Tipped: MM33

91

18 Shining Wisdom

Graphics not important. Excellent story RPG.



Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM44/45/46/47

90

19 Panzer Dragoon Zwei

Awesome, but short, shoot 'em up 'ride'.



Reviewed: MM43
Tipped: MM44

90

20 Bug!

One of few worthy Saturn platformers.

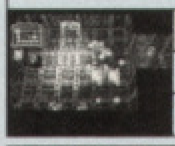


Reviewed: MM35
Tippod: MM

90

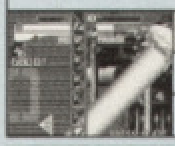
21 Guardian Heroes
Quirky scrolling beat 'em up. Treasure's legendary intensity.

Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM41
90

22 Loaded
Relentless, sadistic plan-view shooter. Go berserk.

Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM45/4
90

23 Alien Trilogy
The atmosphere papers over the weaknesses.

Reviewed: MM48
Tipped: MM
90

24 X-Men:COTA
Classic 2D combat game let down slightly by PAL format.

Reviewed: MM39
Tipped: MM40
89

25 Story of Thor 2
Precious gameplay hidden in the depths of this RPG.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM49/50
89

26 Blam! Machinehead
Beefy blaster product of warped minds.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: MM
89

27 Need for Speed
Reckless road racing with a highly developed sense of speed.

Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM
88

28 Wipeout
Excellent concept racer on futuristic speeders.

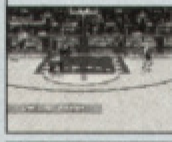
Reviewed: MM43
Tipped: MM44
88

29 Athlete Kings
Hi-res multi-sports action. Generally acclaimed.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM49
88

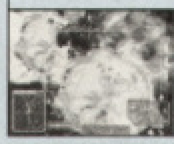
30 Euro '96
Official football festival with plenty of supporters.

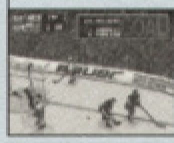
Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM46
88

31 NBA Action
Sega's underrated, but well made basketball sim.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM48
88

32 Mystaria
Shining Force-style adventure in scale and gameplay.

Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM38
87

33 Gungriffon
Tactical Mech War in a heavy duty shooter.

Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM46
87

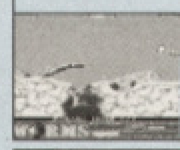
34 NHL Powerplay Hockey '96
Fantastically slick adaptation of the sport to console.

Reviewed: MM46
Tipped: MM
87

35 Baku Baku Animal
The coolest, maddest Tetris puzzler ever.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM38
86

36 Space Hulk
Spooky monster strategy/action game.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM
86

37 Worms
Ugly, amusing team strategy game with its hardcore fans.

Reviewed: MM39
Tipped: MM
86

38 Rayman
Conventional but pleasing platformer of the old school.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM38
85

39 The Horde
Nothing quite like this mad mock-medieval game of tactics.

Reviewed: MM
Tipped: MM
85

40 Sim City 2000
The classic city-builder game, but a tad slow.

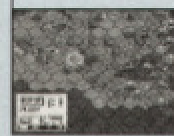
Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM
85

41 Valora Valley Golf
Golf given an edge by being set in Hell.

Reviewed: MM46
Tipped: MM
84

42 NBA Jam TE
A faultless rendition of the old arcade game.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM39
84

43 Iron Storm
Fascinating Import war strategy game. Long and sweaty sessions.

Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM
84

44 Theme Park
The only business simulation with any grin value.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM
83

45 Olympic Games
15 Atlanta-inspired events. Let down only visually.

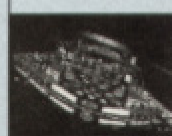
Reviewed: MM46
Tipped: MM
82

46 FIFA Soccer '96
Rather discredited by newer titles, but still fun.

Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM41
82

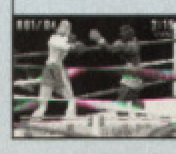
47 True Pinball
Four fine tables and grumble-free graphics.

Reviewed: MM39
Tipped: MM
82

48 Pro-Pinball: The Web
A single table of admirable complexity and realism.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM
80

49 World Series Baseball
If you like the game, you should like the simulation.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM 39
80

50 Victory Boxing
You want boxing, this is the one respectable option.

Reviewed: MM31
Tipped: MM32
80

Q&A

Never has my pleasure been greater in answering your letters than now, in black and white. Now I can pretend to be in a Sixties TV programme, like Z-Cars. Join me with your retro enquiries at 'DEAR SIR, OR IS IT MADAM...? Q&A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

FLOWERPOT MEN

Dear Gus,

I don't have any 'put in order from best to worst' questions (I know how much you hate them) but I do have a few questions for you?

1. Will Daytona CCE really be running at 60FPS?
2. Have Bubble Bobble, Rainbow Island and Hi Ten Bomberman been signed up for a UK release this year? And how about New Zealand Story, do you know if an enhanced version of that will ever appear on the Saturn?
3. Will there ever be a Mystaria 2, the first one was good while it lasted but it was too easy to complete.
4. Are Technosoft making any games for the Saturn? All of their Thunderforce games were ace on the MD.
5. What do you think of Killer Instinct 1 and 2? I myself think they are utter crap, you need more skill to pull off a 5 hit combo with Akira out of VF2 than you need to do an 80+ hit combo in KI2.
6. Do you need a widescreen TV to play ten player at Bomberman?
7. What football team do you support?...Scottish team that is...

Gary Cormack, Scotland

GUS: 1. Yes, see the review. 2. Bubble Bobble and Rainbow Islands are an excellent two-game pack from Acclaim. Bomberman has yet to receive a UK publisher, though Sega have expressed interest. New Zealand Story — there's no news, but Taito seem to be steadily going through their back catalogue. 3. Yes, I believe we have a preview this ish. 4. Two separate Thunderforce compilations are available on import currently. 5. Killer Instinct is the saddest Johnny-come-lately Kombat wannabe I can think of. 6. Yes. 7. When I was young I was taken to St. Mirren matches in Paisley, but they are so crap I can't go on supporting them. I have to pay respect to the Rangers juggernaut.

RAWHIDE

Dear Gus,

Because you know absolutely everthing could you answer these questions for me:

1. Which games do you think I should buy next for my Saturn out of: Doom, Tomb Raider or FIFA 97?
2. Is it true that Sega are bringing out a keyboard, a floppy disk drive and a hard disk drive for the Saturn?
3. If so when will they be out, how much do you think they would cost and would they be worth buying?
4. I was wondering whether to save up and buy a PC or to wait for the keyboard and disk drives and get them for my Saturn instead?
5. Will the Saturn's CD work like a CD-ROM with the keyboard and disk drives attached?
6. Because Mean Machines is such a good magazine when will you bring out the next Saturn demo-disk freebie?

Cheers,
John Bovey, Newton Abbot



Core's Tomb Raider in all its 3D splendour.

GUS: 1. Isn't that entirely dependent on what you want to play? All will be good, but Tomb Raider is the most original to my mind. 2. This is conjecture based on how Saturn would naturally evolve with the Netlink. Only the keyboard is a definite intention of Sega, to make net browsing more practical. 3. No figures have been suggested for the possible keyboard. 4. There will be lots of things a Saturn will never be able to do that a PC can't, so I'd honestly advise getting a PC. 5. You've got an obsession with this Saturn PC thing — it's not going to happen! 6. I can't honestly say, we'll see how you all respond to this one.

DOCTOR WHO

Dear Gus,

Hi there, I'm a first time writer - long time reader... could you please answer some questions, thanks!

1. When will the Internet package for the Saturn be released in the UK?
2. Resident Evil, is it, or is it not being released on the Saturn? If so when?
3. Are import peripherals usable on a UK Saturn, or are UK add-ons the only ones which would work?
4. You mentioned in issue 47 that you had a black Virtua Cop gun, are there any import shops in the country which may stock them? If so which one?
5. I have heard that some shops have stopped supplying Saturns and Saturn games, does this indicate poor sales on the Saturn's part?
6. If so is this something to worry about?
7. Which two Saturn racing games would you recommend as essential purchases?

Thanks for your time...
Paul Dennet, Blackpool

GUS: 1. At the September ECTS, Andy Mee, Marketing Manager for Saturn in Europe said, 'we will bring this piece of technology to the European market, but it may take some time'. I interpret that to mean Spring '97. 2. The most coherent reports suggest a version of RE 2 some time middle of next year. 3. There are few compatibility problems, though some UK Saturns don't like Japanese joypads being removed while the machine is on (?). Virtua Guns work fine. 4. It's very difficult to get import guns as they are virtually (!) illegal, due to UK rules on toys which do not allow 'replica' weapons. I brought my Virtua Gun through customs personally, and we even had to contact Narita airport in Tokyo beforehand. 5. Oh, you heard the Our Price story, saying they were only taking PSX. Well, that story is bull. Sega have sold in all their allocation of Saturn from Japan for Christmas. 6. I wouldn't say so. 7. Sega Rally and Daytona CCE.

HANCOCK'S HALF HOUR

Dear (An)Gus,

1. What is the most popular game in the MMS office for the Saturn, the Megadrive and the Game Gear?
2. What are the age ratings for Exhumed and Tomb Raider if any?
3. Is 3D Lemmings for the Saturn any good?
4. What is Dungeon Keeper about and is it a good game to play? What about Fade to Black?
5. Is it really a must to get Baku Baku Animal?
6. Is there an age rating for Alien Trilogy?
7. What will the sequel to Soviet Strike be called?
8. Roughly how many titles are there for the Saturn?

Jodie Mosson, London

GUS: 1. A quick poll would say Sega Rally or Street Fighter Zero 2, Micro Machines and Pete Sampras. Or maybe it wouldn't... 2. Exhumed is for 11+, I've yet to know of Tomb Raider's rating, I'd guess all ages. 3. It's rather anoraky, more complex but not as much fun as old 2D Lemmings. 4. Dungeon Keeper is a typical Bullfrog strategy game, and the PC version is great. Fade to Black is very cool but only on PSX at present. 5. If you like Tetris games, I'd say so. 6. 15+, but who cares? 7. Soviet Strike 2? Only kidding, I've no idea. Let them finish the first game forchrissake. 8. 200 out by Christmas.

STEPTOE AND SON

Oiee! Gus!

Answer my questions or I'll burn your town down with my hard mates and set my pet Mexican onto you (?!) Anyway, here's question 1:

1. I have just bought NiGHTS. Why is there that weird connector socket thingy on the analogue control pad?
2. Have you got any cheats for this yet? Otherwise, have you got any cheats for Donkey Kong Land on the Gameboy?
3. When is Independence Day coming out on the Saturn?
4. What is the point of those pathetic little PlayStation cases which Sega include with their game and add-on range? Eg. Virtua Cop, NiGHTS.

Tim Horsfall, Derbyshire

GUS:Please, less YOB stuff. 1. The controller disconnects to allow additional expansion. 2. We've run a two-part guide on NiGHTS. 3. ID4 has slipped slightly, but should be early next year. 4. Some people think those boxes are cool.

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After last month's general guide to the opening six levels, here's a more detailed look at the most demanding challenges: Twin Seeds and Wizeman.

NiGHTS into dreams...

PLAYER'S GUIDE PART 2





TWIN SEEDS

The layout of the fourth stage is the same for Claris and Elliot (in effect the game has only seven levels) and your tactics for each course are thus the same. Things are different with the kids, there is no paralooping, so you have to touch each item to pick it up. The principle of picking twenty balls to release the Ideya is the same, but you have only time to make one pass of each course to get a hefty bonus.

COURSE 1

You should boost from the start, grabbing the bonus ball and heading through the speed boost, but dip immediately afterwards to avoid the ideya claw (destroying it partially is a waste of precious time and ruins the bonus ball). Boost through the hoops and make a tight circle in the collection of stars and balls. After the next series of hoops there are balls within three sets of hoops. The pattern is middle, low and high. You must get every one of these.









Three sets of 'stirrup' loops you need to learn the trajecxtory to pass through.

COURSE 2

There are two sets of loops at the start. Go through the first clockwise from the top right and boost out to maintain the link. Head low to hit the following pair of switches. These release a cloud of star which create big links when flown through. Hitting both switches releases double the stars. After this there is a cage of balls sandwiched between two spike rings. It's better just to avoid these and fly in to break it from the top or bottom. Then comes the biggest scoring potential on this course. There is a circle of balls surrounding a booster. Circle around these picking the bonus ball first, then boost into the large bubble to the right. If you hit it hard enough it will zoom off laying a trail of rings, enough to open the bonus ball. You must hit it horizontally, or the trail will zig zag and be impossible to follow. Apply some speed, as the rings begin to narrow quickly.



The ice bubble ring thing – get it right people!

COURSE 3

After course 2 has ended, there is some distance to the Ideya claw. You can bridge it by hitting the star switch which is just above you. Linking the following bonus ball is difficult, and needs a boost just as you pick up the three balls. When the claw appears, dodge underneath it. The next segment has two 'slopes of loops', one up, the other down. Accelerate through these and keep the boost pressed, as it allows you to burst through the row of balloons (each of which holds a ball). Boost the rest of the way to the Ideya claw.





Use Dash to bomb through this level and make up time.



WIZEMAN

Wizeman will present four separate attack challenges to you. To defeat each one you must reach him then wait for your partner NiGHTS to also grab hold of him. Each time he rocks, loop through him to speed up his next attack and get a better time.

FIREBALLS

These are generally low-level and can be ducked, but watch for the occasional low shot. He should get four shots at you.



ROCKS

NiGHTS should fly above or below these rows. Watch the first one, which is always at mid-height and very close.



SNOWBALLS

Getting stuck to one of these means score mutilation. Fly in low for half the distance until his aim starts to track you, then fly sharply up and towards.

WHIRLWIND

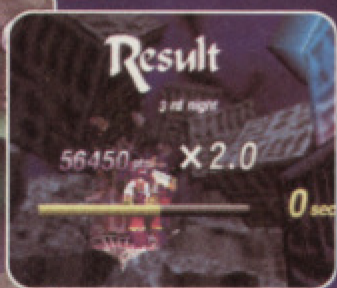
There is only one safe point of passage at the centre of these vortexes, and it's all too easy to get caught up. Use boost to speed your way out. By boosting all the way toward him, you will give him only one chance to launch a whirlwind.





Brushing these is the surest way to muck up your scoring chances.





The proof of the player's guide in pudding form. A perfect multiplier.

COURSE 4

This course presents two options for ball collecting. The easiest involves climbing up to the high set of hoops, diving down through them, then following an arc to the right to collect the sets of balls. You come to another set of hoops. Go up through this, keeping the boost pressed. Any additional balls you need can be found in the balloons. Alternately, go straight to the balloons and power you way through twenty of them.













Balloon busting or last track following, the choice is yours.

NiGHTS HIGH FLYERS

We're putting aside space each month for the ultimate scorers on the ultimate score game. Send in your scores or links for the whole game or your best level. We want some form of proof, but please don't send memory carts. For now, here's the office best:

SPRING VALLEY

COURSE 1	SCORE:63620	Dan Jevons	LINK:28 Dan Jevons
COURSE 2	SCORE:43730	Dan Jevons	LINK:39 Dan Jevons
COURSE 3	SCORE:55900	Dan Jevons	LINK:25 Dan Jevons
COURSE 4	SCORE:38790	Dan Jevons	LINK:29Gus Swan
OVERALL:		**349010**	**Dan Jevons**

SPLASH GARDEN

COURSE1	SCORE:61490	Dan Jevons	LINK:41Dan Jevons
COURSE2	SCORE:30820	Gus Swan	LINK:17Gus Swan
COURSE3	SCORE:34890	Dan Jevons	LINK:24Dan Jevons
COURSE4	SCORE:23010	Dan Jevons	LINK:14Gus Swan
OVERALL:		**264400**	**Dan Jevons**

MYSTIC FOREST

COURSE1	SCORE:64750	Dan Jevons	LINK:32Dan Jevons
COURSE2	SCORE:31430	Dan Jevons	LINK:16Gus Swan
COURSE3	SCORE:40720	Dan Jevons	LINK:21Gus Swan
COURSE4	SCORE:17130	Dan Jevons	LINK:15Dan Jevons
OVERALL:		**246030**	**Dan Jevons**

FROZEN BELL

COURSE1	SCORE:81270	Dan Jevons	LINK:147Dan Jevons
COURSE2	SCORE:41590	Dan Jevons	LINK:48Dan Jevons
COURSE3	SCORE:31170	Dan Jevons	LINK:30Gus Swan
COURSE4	SCORE:39010	Dan Jevons	LINK:15Dan Jevons
OVERALL:		**294450**	**Dan Jevons**

SOFT MUSEUM

COURSE1	SCORE:73750	Gus Swan	LINK:90Dan Jevons
COURSE2	SCORE:40370	Dan Jevons	LINK:27Gus Swan
COURSE3	SCORE:35610	Gus Swan	LINK:29Gus Swan
COURSE4	SCORE:31170	Dan Jevons	LINK:28Dan Jevons
OVERALL:		**330440**	**Dan Jevons**

STICK CANYON

COURSE1	SCORE:39460	Gus Swan	LINK:31Gus Swan
COURSE2	SCORE:22360	Dan Jevons	LINK:31Gus Swan
COURSE3	SCORE:27420	Gus Swan	LINK:10Gus Swan
COURSE4	SCORE:27440	Dan Jevons	LINK:40Dan Jevons
OVERALL:		**156120**	**Dan Jevons**

TWIN SEEDS

COURSE1	SCORE:14130	Gus Swan	LINK:30Gus Swan
COURSE2	SCORE:16220	Dan Jevons	LINK:37Gus Swan
COURSE3	SCORE:17430	Gus Swan	LINK:37Gus Swan
COURSE4	SCORE:19850	Gus Swan	LINK:20Dan Jevons
OVERALL:		**112900**	**Gus Swan**

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN — WE WANT NiGHTS SCORES!

review

Game Name	Street Racer		
Publisher	UBISOFT		
Release	November	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Racing		
Import?	×	Linkplay? ×	Players 1-8
Control	Joypad		
Background	Vivid Image updates its 16 bit Mario Kart style racer.		

Wouldn't it be great to go Go-karting and, for once, not have that guy there always shouting at you not to bash the other cars?

Street Racer is the only Saturn Go-kart simulator and positively demands irresponsible behaviour behind the wheel. No kart game can ignore the huge contribution to gaming made by Nintendo's Mario Kart, which set the standard way back in 1992 with its awesome control and nefarious tactics, and that must always be seen in the background, moving the hand of Street Racer. Mev Dinc's home-grown Street Racer has matured from SNES and Megadrive cart form to a Saturn game created using custom effects that show Sega hardware is not short of a few tricks of its own.















Collect stars scattered througout each track and gain valuable Bonus points.



Even with multiple players on-screen simultaneously, the action never drops below 60fps.

PIECES FOR EIGHT

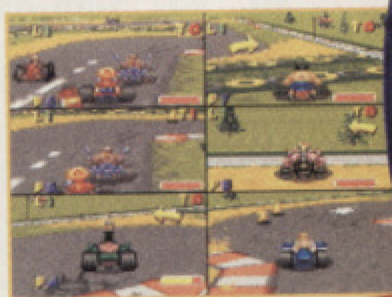
UbiSoft is promoting Street Racer as the first eight-player racing game, an undeniably correct fact. This feat is acheived by splitting the screen into eight boxes. Although your view is restricted, the game still runs at 60 frames per second (another first), in multi-player mode. But Street Racer fans would testify that the full eight-man monty is too confusing unless you really know your way around the courses. Best then to stick to the alternative 'Micro Mode' that comes perilously close to nicking the game design of Codemasters' celebrated machines. All eight cars are visible on the course tracked from a high camera angle. The fighting elements are stripped out of Micro Mode to make it a pure contest of speed.



Learn the layout of each track to find essential short-cuts. You'll shave seconds off your best lap times.



Street Racer's amazing eight player split-screen mode has to be seen to be believed. The reduced screen size has little effect on gameplay.



Multi-player action increases Street Racer's long-term appeal.



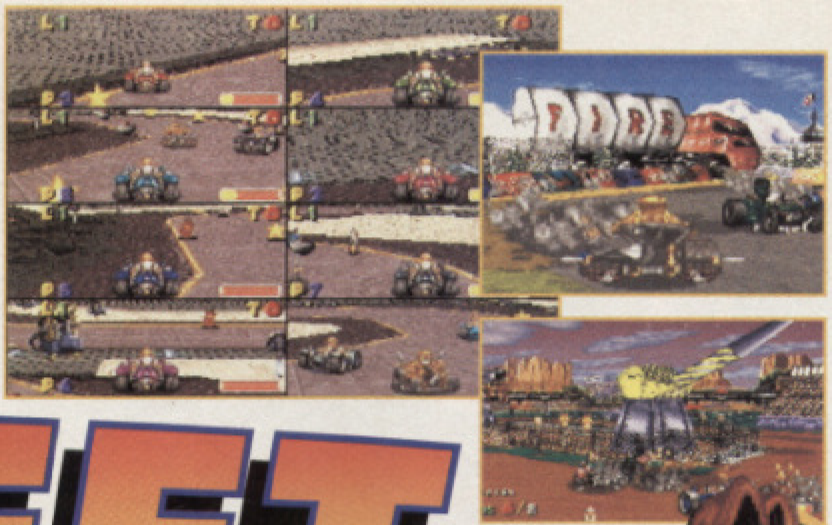






Rip through the set of Baywatch to locate Pamela Anderson's misplaced silicone implants.

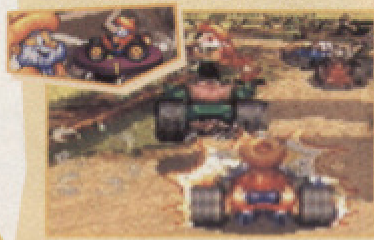






STREET FIGHTING YEARS

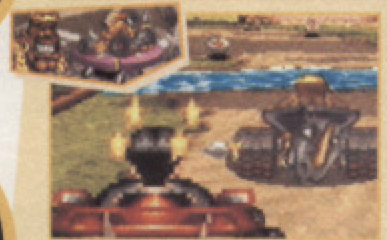
Combat is half the challenge. Each player has three forms of attack that stun opponents for a few seconds and give you the advantage. The basic attack is a sideways swipe at adjacent cars. The characters also have two comic special attacks each, which have various effects



HODJA
His genie grapple snatches opponents.



FRANK
Very cool spook spoiler scares the pack.



SUZULU
Spears spike passing cars on either side.



BIFF
Custom suspension allows him to extend his axle!



RAPHAEL
His in-car stereo sends 'em spinning.



SURF SISTER
Cars nearby are bewitched by her sweet kisses.



HELMUT
His craft takes to the air and drops a bomb.



SUMO
The latest electronic stunner zaps the competition.





The Rumble Mode gives players the opportunity to knock their opponents out of an enclosed arena.

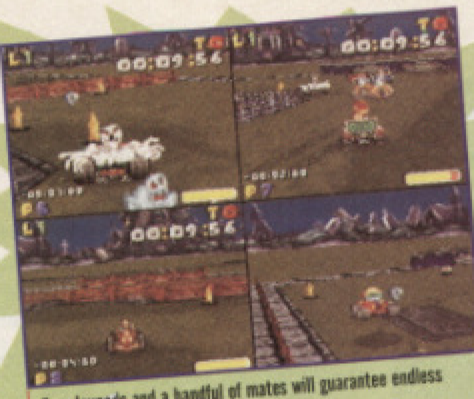




There's no sadder sight than that of a slap-happy lap. Spinning stars show if you're hit.

CUP HANDS

The championship game is split into three cup races; Bronze, Silver and Gold. These are formed from a selection of 'home' tracks for the characters (who each have three). The Bronze competition is characterised by short, simple, layouts, but the second and third tracks are progressively more sophisticated, with crossovers. You may only access the later cups by winning the previous class. You can also create a 'custom' cup but only from tracks you have revealed in the championship races.



Four loupads and a handful of mates will guarantee endless months of fast-paced fun.















Barge, bash and bump your opponents out of the way. Whatever it takes to win each race.



Only the best racers will ever set foot on the winner's podium. Are you up to the challenge?



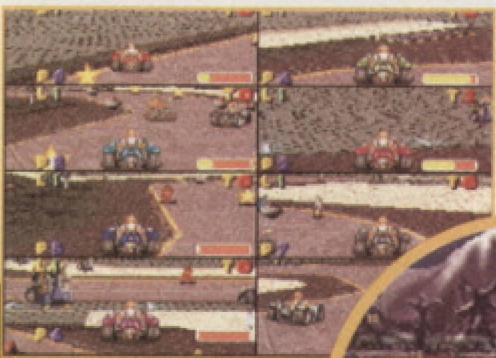


The Saturn version of Street Racer pushes Sega's 32 bit hardware even further with cool graphical effects.





Give the opposition a spot of bovver with a variety of weapons. Comical attacks are the order of the day.



R U GOOD ENUFF?

Street Racer caters for all skill levels by design. There are two driving 'models', the simplistic easy mode, and a more challenging ride from 'expert'. The skill level also ranks from a pacey 'easy' to a totally 'crazy', and the level of your opponents AI changes accordingly.



Even seasoned racing veterans will find their skills pushed to the limits.





The CPU adjusts the difficulty level accordingly.





Blimey, what a surprise! Yes readers, the obligatory Haunted House stage makes yet another appearence in UbiSoft's awesome Street Racer update. Spooky stuff, eh?



comment



GUS

Street Racer Saturn's strengths and weaknesses are surprisingly close to those of the 16-bit game. The graphics and game engine are just like a souped-up SNES, which may sound a little unkind when the game is working out with eight separate player windows! Technically, the game is very impressive and smart-looking, although the sprite-based cars use rather rudimentary animation. The meat of the game – the single-player mode – is pretty complex, with fighting, pick-ups and steering all to be considered, but the tracks are sometimes too crowded and the collision detection between the karts not too distinct. My main gripe is the weapons – much the same as the first game and just as ineffective. What's the point of taking time out to zap an enemy when he recovers almost without slowing most of the time? The multi-player game can be appreciated for what it is, a laff for mates, the Rumble mode is a great extra, the options are detailed, but some niggly gameplay aspects stop this from being a true classic.

comment



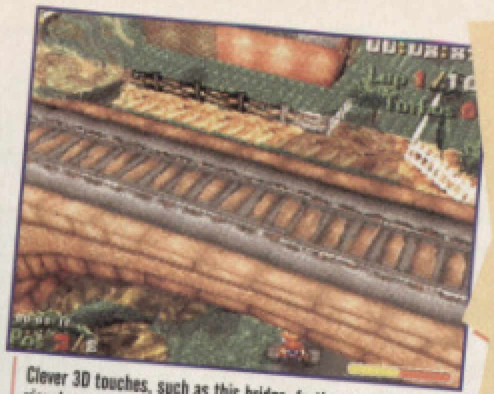
MATT

You can't help but feel sympathetic towards Street Racer. Permanently in the shadow of Nintendo's Super Mario Kart, UbiSoft has had a constant uphill struggle to give its very own driving title a distinct identity of its own. This has meant a multitude of optional extras, such as improved multi-player modes and secrets galore yet the basic game itself retains its 16 bit roots. That's not to say that Saturn owners will feel cheated with the quality or simplistic styling of this game. On the contrary, UbiSoft has once again produced a clever, cartoony racing game that deserves a place in every 32 bit collection.









Clever 3D touches, such as this bridge, further add to the visual complexity of each track.



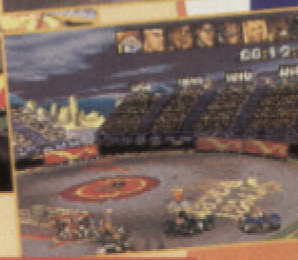
The digital clock attached to this hapless player indicates a bomb has been dropped onto his vehicle.

RUMBLINGS

The Rumble option is a 'bonus' game, also for up to eight players. The objective is simply to eject all other cars from the arena, by first knocking down the walls. It's also a place to practice fighting techniques, including the block mode, which protects you from damage.







Smash the living daylights out of other drivers in the immensely enjoyable Rumble mode. It's multi-player mayhem!







Complete each cup challenge and players will be rewarded with a variety of goodies including extra tracks and bonus play modes.

BOMBARDIER!

The unsavoury practice of blowing your mates off is standard in Street Racer. The tracks are littered with dynamite devices that stick to your cars and countdown to detonation. But they can be passed, parcel-stylee before the inevitable bang.



If a bomb becomes attached to your kart, simply pass the deadly device to another player. This takes skill and timing but there's nothing more rewarding than watching an opponent take the brunt of a blast.

scores

GRAPHICS The backgrounds have the most impact, they really are excellent. The sprite characters are decent enough.

92

SOUND The music suits the game but it doesn't have any kind of edge. But then it is French. The FX are jolly.

83

PLAYABILITY The most fun is to be found in the multi-player modes, but they seem to miss some of the Mario Kart magic.

88

LASTABILITY Street Racer is strong on options, giving the longevity for single players a leg-up.

84

overall

A lot of effort has gone into producing an accessible and fun racing title. A well-crafted but not quite magical game.

87

review

Game Name	Chaos Control
Publisher	Infogrames
Release	Out Now
Price	£39.99
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up
Import?	✓
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1-2
Control	Joypad/Virtua Gun
Background	Based on the 300 update of the PC original.

Owners of the Virtua Gun have probably noticed that there's little else you can do with it other than play Virtua Cop and its up-coming sequel. Unless you want to try and rob a bank or something. But now you can play Chaos Control as well, so stop blubbing. Then again...

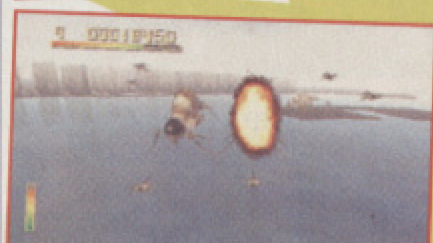
Aliens are everywhere you know. There are currently about five billion of them floating about on a small blue-green planet, whirling through a vast galaxy at thousands of miles an hour. Then there's us of course, and there's nothing weirder than people after all.

But strange and Martian-like as we may be, we're not half as good at invading planets as other advanced species seem to be. This time the perpetrators go under the catchy title of the Kesh Rhan. Having begun their invasion in New York, probably to pick up some bagels or something, this is the destination you confront them on first.

Chaos Control is a first-person perspective shoot 'em up in the Virtua Cop style, except of course it's aliens rather than cro-magnon criminals. This means you spend all of your time flying about rather than moving on foot (or car) and it even means you venture into outer space...



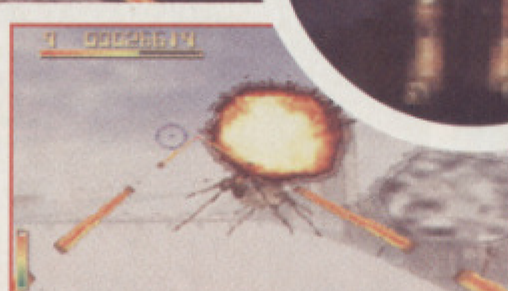





CHAOS CONTROL











comment



GUS

This is, without a shadow of a doubt, a truly abominable game. Now I know what you might be thinking. You're looking at the screenshots thinking some of the graphics don't look too bad. I'm willing to concede this (although you could never excuse the hilarious smoke explosions as the aliens are destroyed) but as soon as you start playing you realise what a shambles Chaos Control is. The action is frenetic but involves shooting indiscriminately at the screen because there are so many enemies there's no time to target them. Not only does this obliterate the sense of tension you get in a game like Virtua Cop, but after half an hour or so of such 'chaos' the game is over. The only shot Chaos Control has left to fire is into its own foot.

START SPREADING THE NEWS...

Chaos Control has two parts so to speak. The first of them sees you piloting New York harbour, circling the Statue of Liberty a few times, and then heading into Manhattan. Here you cruise along the avenues with skyscrapers looming either side, attacks coming from both the ground and the air in the shape of tanks, stationary cannons, and a variety of flying enemies. The routes you take through the buildings are decided for you which is a good thing because you'll want to concentrate on taking aim.

scores

GRAPHICS	76
SOUND	80
PLAYABILITY	50
LASTABILITY	31

overall

A truly awful game that does nothing for the Saturn and nothing to make owners of the Virtual Gun any happier.

43



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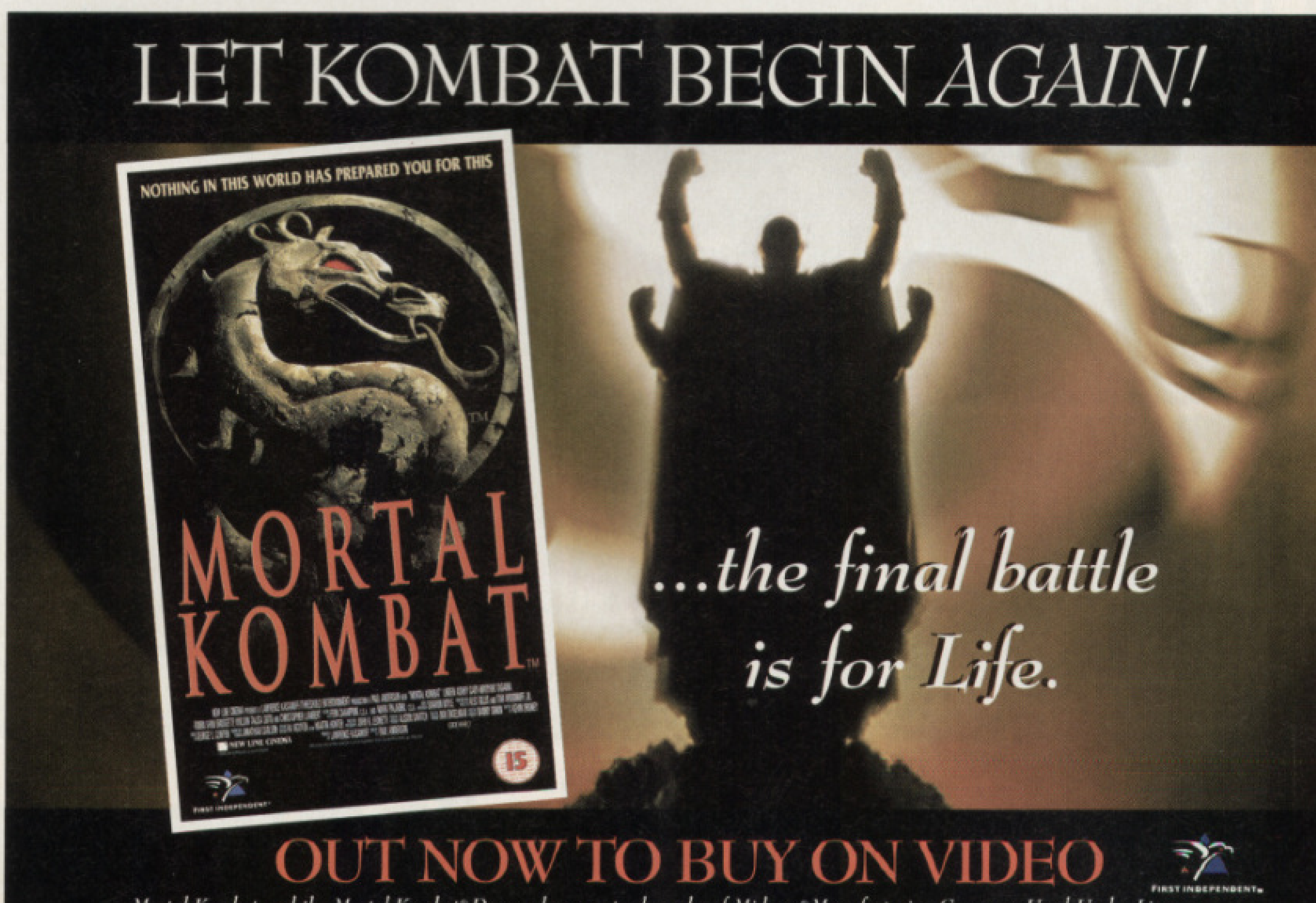
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review

Game Name	Amok
Publisher	Sega
Release	November
Price	£
Game Style	Shoot 'em up
Import?	✕
Linkplay?	✓
Players	1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	A typical Scavenger game crafted over three years.

After 47 years, the programming came to an end...

Actually, the plot according to A.M.O.K states that the War came to an end, but we know better, considering how long the Saturn has waited to receive Scavenger's first 32-bit shoot-'em-up. The Scavenger name first came to the fore with two exceptional Megadrive games, Subterrania and Red Zone, created by its Zyrinx team. A separate team, Lemon, started on 32-bit projects in 1994, A.M.O.K being a 32X demo at that stage! The project has matured into a fully-fledged 3D shooter with multiple objective missions strung together with a plot that charges you with causing havoc on an island that houses the future weapons development of the shadowy A.T.Z.K Corporation. Your sole piece of equipment is the remarkable Bird Walker prototype, a formidably adaptable and controllable amphibious vehicle. Lie back, it's going to be a bumpy ride.



A+M-



I'm Haddock McSkate, fish vidi-actor extraordinaire. You may remember me from Amok, where I played third menacing fish. I went for a part in Darius 2 but didn't get it, sadly. Something about not being a spaceship.

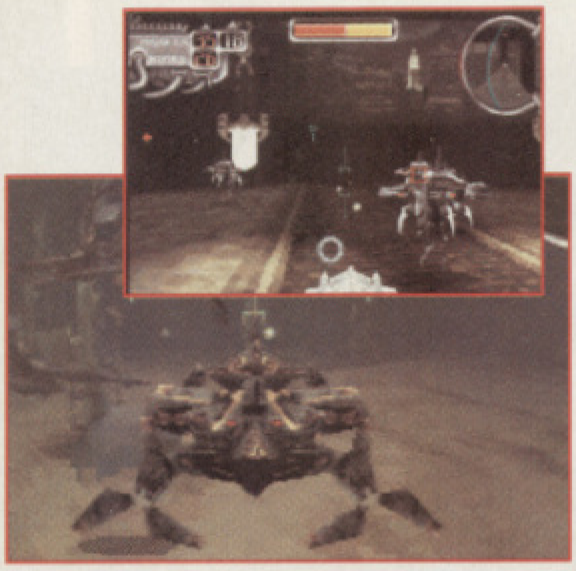


It looks ungainly but this is the most potent fighting machine in the world. Ever. Really.

CO-OPERATIVES

AMOK is unique in its two-player, work-together option. A well-arranged split-screen option allows both to cooperate over the same missions as the single-player game. As the game works as a series of tasks, the two can split and tackle different areas simultaneously.







For your information, you can squash the little guys underfoot. Fun, fun, fun.



Whenever I see the word 'ammo' I think, "What a horrible Americanism for ammunition", and feel compelled to explode it forthwith. Yours, Caroline Napier.

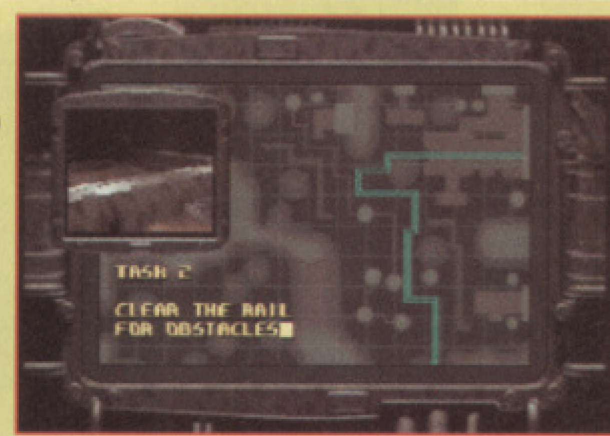


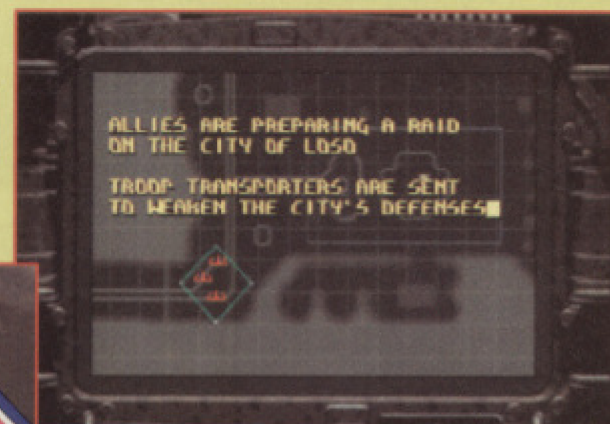
ARMED AND DANGEROUS

The Bird Walker is a curious engine of war. On land, it uses a bi-pedal propulsion system which gives it the speed to outrun most wheeled transport. As well as an inexhaustible chain gun weapon, it can carry 40 additional standard missiles, 20 super missiles and 30 mines with far greater destructive power. The Bird Walker is just as useful in deep water, where its legs convert into twin propellers, and its armaments are just as effective in that environment.

FULLY BRIEFED

A.M.O.K's action flows in a complex mission structure. Each of these is laid out in a computerised briefing which pinpoints the task areas on a dropzone map. Each task must be tackled in turn, as the effect of completing one task is usually necessary to achieve the next. Failure to comply with any one part renders the mission a complete failure and must be reattempted, even if the Bird Walker is able to reach the rendezvous point.









The word 'brief' is always good for a laugh because it describes the sort of information shown above and mens' pants. AMOK is jock-full of briefs.

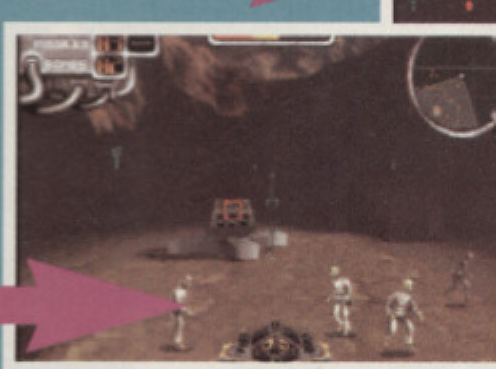
TAKE OUT GENERATOR

A common mission task, as many of A.Z.T.K's facilities rely on a constant power supply. Generators are defended, but as missions progress these defenses become more elaborate, with fixed missile batteries supplementing infantry battalions.

CLEAR MINE FIELD

Mines are ubiquitous on these battlefields, but occasionally they must be removed and not just avoided. One example of this is when an allied supply column is waiting for you to clear a mine-strewn road.





RESCUE PRISONERS

A.Z.T.K. holds a number of allied prisoners in electrified pens. If they are able to escape, you can collect them easily with the Bird Walker. Their information helps you penetrate other defenses more easily.

INTERCEPT CRAFT

An A.Z.T.K. operative is attempting to take vital weapons plans back to his superiors. You must intercept and annihilate his craft before it is able to leave the mission area.



DESTROY INSTALLATION

Incinerating the depots and labs within A.Z.T.K. territory is a priority. Use your digital compass to locate these areas and create a firestorm, as many buildings will only succumb to your special weapons. These are also places to stock up on your own weaponry.



CLEAR MONORAIL

An example of using the enemy's infrastructure against them. The monorail will allow you to transport a bomb deep into their installation, but it must be cleared of obstructions along its length first.






SECRET ARMY



A.M.O.K's playfields are large, but there is more for the dogged explorer to find. Many walls can be blown away to reveal secret areas sometimes stuffed with power-ups, especially the more precious full energy and hull improvement icons. Your tally of secret finds are revealed in the mission debriefing.



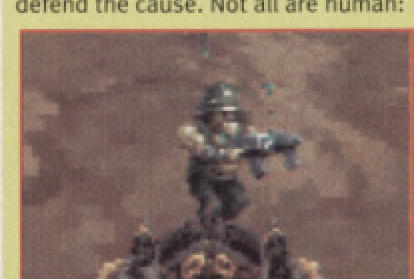





How do the enemy hope to succeed if they don't wear the proper protective clothing?

ENEMY LINES

A.Z.T.K has no shortage of fanatical followers willing to defend the cause. Not all are human:



INFANTRY

Pathetic cannon-fodder, you can even stamp them into the ground with the Bird Walker.



MOTORISED INFANTRY

Patrol the area around the prison level. They use ramps to speed up.



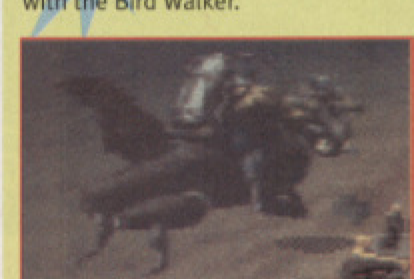
SHARKS

The most terrifying organic predator, trained to attack on sight. One bite from these jaws and you're a gonna!



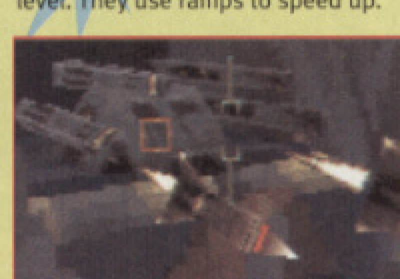
FROGMEN

Water-based equivalent of infantry patrol in large 'shoals'. Fast and packed with firepower.



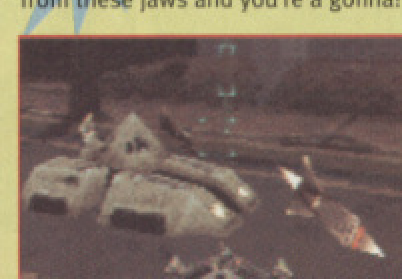
MINI-SUBS

The most maneouvreable and deadly underwater class of enemy. Watch your back for these guys.



BATTERIES

Fixed missile sites become more effective and resilient later on. Blast them with your own rockets.



TANKS

Slow and ineffective at gaining a lock-on target, but heavily armed. Tough to destroy.



TRANSPORT

Flying saucer tech used for carrying supplies, but with energy weapons which shouldn't be underestimated.

A+M+O+K

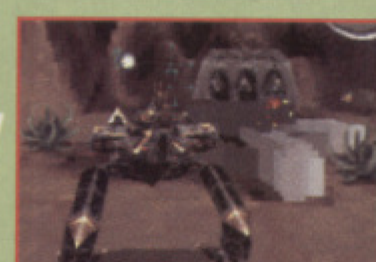


Tracking....target fix.....fire orange slices at will! The forces of Citrus will prevail!



Don't let the first aid kit pass you by.









Jaques Cousteau would have a whale of a time in this undersea kingdom.









comment



MATT

Scavenger have made a name for themselves without releasing any of their promising games over the last two years. Now AMOK puts their money firmly where their mouth has been with a brilliant marriage of slick programming, dance culture attitude (chiefly borne in the music) and gameplay with a relentless, merciless aspect. AMOK could so easily have become a high-carnage free-for-all, but it's structure hides a strong strategic thinking. Perhaps the amount of secret areas is excessive and the process of scouring the levels a little tedious when the urge is to push onward. However, the contingent of gamers saturated with the likes of Blam! Machinehead, have a new hero.

comment



GUS

Scavenger are unmistakably part of the hardcore gaming fraternity, and for all its technical slickness, it's the game design of AMOK that makes it as good as it is. Lemon's approach to creating a fast, complex 3D world is novel, they've chosen to go for game elements rather than fancy scenery. At first, that makes AMOK appear barren and lifeless, as well as dark and sinister. As the levels progress, the amount of movement and extent of the enemy puts this into perspective. You soon find yourself the target for dozens of enemies without any slowing in the game pace. Not that the visual engine isn't effective, the stylised chunky graphic algorithms work particularly well undewater, which is a suitably murky environment. The typically Scavenger multiple mission structure points to a well-thought out game, but doesn't quite dispel the monotony that develops by playing this over any extended period. Nevertheless, AMOK is in the same mode and to the same standard as the likes of Blam! Machinehead and Thunderhawk 2.

scores

GRAPHICS

The function is more important than the cosmetic effect, but AMOK still manages to have a stylish gloomy look. The speed and smoothness of the 3D is not in question.

85

SOUND

The music is a selection of excellent techno cuts, ambient soundscapes, deep bass and trance, with its own distinct Scavenger groove. The effects convey the mayhem and carnage, with bassy explosions.

92

PLAYABILITY

Very much a Scavenger game with freedom to go mental within a mission structure. The later levels show the amount of sprites the engine can handle. The two-player option is unexpected and welcome.

89

LASTABILITY

The game's main flaw is the feeling of repetitiveness that sinks in, despite the variation in the tasks set, and fewer weapons than is healthy. But the action is mint nonetheless.

85

overall

Lemon have hit all their targets with AMOK, which may not grab the eye, but adequately works out the trigger finger.

88

review

Game Name	Street Fighter Alpha 2
Publisher	Virgin
Release	December
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Beat'Em Up
Import?	✕
Linkplay?	✕
Players	1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	Stunningly perfect version of the arcade update with more SF characters.

The Streetfighter series of games has been going on for so long it now seems like a soap opera. And if it were a soap opera, it'd be Dallas.

It started years completely unprepared for such rampant success, and has had to cobble its many plotlines together on the fly ever since. Hardcore followers of the Streetfighter mythos (and they do exist, believe us) must have a really tough time keeping up with the constant stream of plot re-amendments engineered to facilitate the next sequel in the line. SF Alpha 2, for those of you not genned-up on the story, is the tournament which occurs just after that of Streetfighter Alpha (which is just after Streetfighter 1) and just before Streetfighter 2. The life stories of the many central characters, which are so intricately entwined, now have so many footnotes explaining mysterious histories that never happened they make absolutely no sense at all. It's really going to hit the fan when the forthcoming Streetfighter V X-Men hits the arcades, I can tell you.

Still, players don't tackle this sort of game for the storylines (although that means the endings are gettng pretty weak). They play Streetfighter for the martial arts ultraviolence, startling visual effects and stunning measure of skill potential. Luckily, SF Alpha 2 possesses sufficient quanitities of these to justify its existence once more.















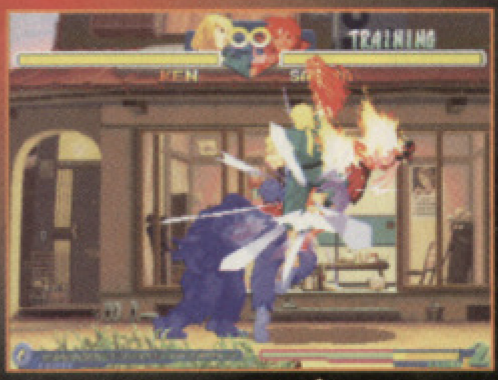
Is it my imagination, or do Chun Li's tights get thicker every game? She's practically wearing support stockings now.



TRAINING

As Streetfighter has developed from the relatively primitive origins of SF1, the level of technical knowledge required to play it well has increased exponentially. It's not just newcomers who could have trouble learning the controls any more. Established hands may be foxed by the new characters, new move types and new commands thrown up by each successive Street. To help eveyone out, Capcom have introduced an excellent training mode to Alpha 2. The player picks a dummy opponent and commands them to position themselves standing, kneeling or jumping. They now have infinite time to beat up their foe, practising special moves and combos to their heart's content. It even tells you how much damage your newly-developed combos cause. Ace.













SUPER COMBOS

Super combos aren't exactly the newest thing in the Streetfighter series, but Alpha 2 certainly does them best. As you perform special moves, land blows and successfully defend yourself a Super Meter at the bottom of the screen fills itself up. Once this is full you officially have enough energy to pull off a Super Combo – an enhanced version of a normal special move complete with a lovely tracer effect. If this connects, it's top damage city. Even more damage can be done if you're patient and allow the bar to fill up twice, or even three times over (the maximum possible power). But don't waste your chance – the meter drops to zero again at the start of each fresh bout.



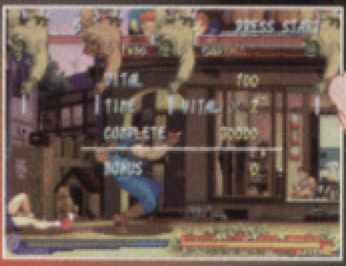


Review

The 'Dallas' of video games is back

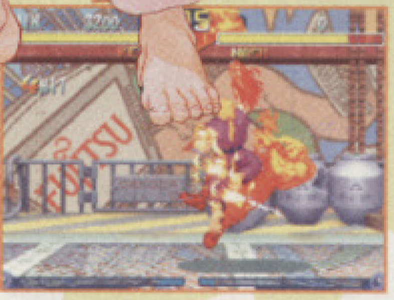
VICTORIES

Once everyone started getting all intricate about the mechanics of Streetfighter, methods of winning have ben the cause of a billion arcade arguments. To end all the bitching Capcom have categorised victories by awarding each one a different winning icon. Winning with a combo or supercombo claims the most desirous symbols. Throws have a neat little lasso. Weak-power regular kicks and punches earn an inexplicable pair of cherries (which are good for humiliating your foe) and cheap shots which finish off a weak opponent get a stinky slice of cheese. Now your brilliance (or lack of it) is immortalised for everyone to see.













We think this guy should carry little 'calling cards' like football casuals to leave on victims saying 'You've just been Sodom-ised'.



Why are these purple people following me?



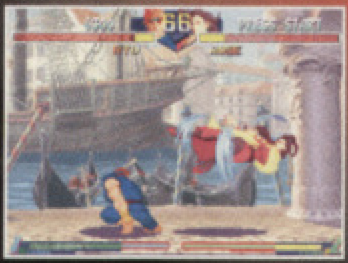






REVERSE ALPHA COUNTERS

It's long been noted that no matter how superb a SF player you are there are some combos it's impossible to avoid. Well, that all changes right now. It's possible to be as good in defence as you are at attacking, thanks to the new Alpha Counters. A quick special movement performs this attack reversal which blocks all damage and actually causes some to the character on the offensive. They're rock hard to time, and you have to have learnt the movement to the point of instinct to ever use it properly. But once this part of your Streetfighting arsenal it's an invaluable tactic.





comment



MATT

After playing Streetfighter 2 and its many sequels for about five years now, it would be only reasonable to expect myself to be bored stiff of the thing by now. But, to my eternal surprise as I'm easily bored, I don't find it in any way dull. In fact, it just gets better. Alright, so squeezing another Alpha in before the launch of SF3 is stretching it a bit, but when a game is as polished, well thought-out and perfectly converted as this my gaming juices flow like Niagara Falls. Those of you already in possession of Saturn Alpha might have to give this a go before buying it, as it's not massively different. If you're without a beat 'em up, though, or you're an avid fan of hitting people in the mouth Alpha 2 should hit the top of your Things I Should Buy list. The graphics and sound are superb, the playabilty is sublime and the depth it offers almost unrivalled.

comment



GUS

No, it's not that different. Brilliant as Alpha 2 is, there's not 50 quids worth of new features over a game that came out as recently as April. That's not to say Capcom don't improve the formula each time by constantly adding new features. If you want the arcade experience, especially, you'll love the full animation option and the presentation, which is surprisingly much cooler than Alpha. If you are not part of the Streetfighter 'thing' you won't understand it's the balance of the game and it's exquisite response which is key, as well as being a game that rewards player skill with excellent performance. I'm beginning to sound like Jeremy Clarkson. Look, if you like beat 'em ups, get it.











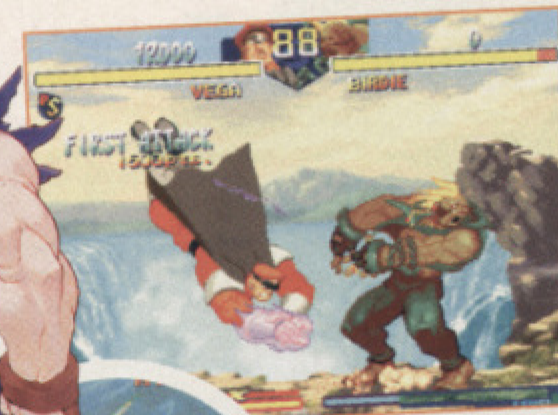
PLAYMODES: SURVIVAL





Think you're hard, eh? Reckon that if Streetfighter was real life you'd be wrestling with Spartan psychopaths in your spare time? Well Saturn SF Alpha 2 offers you the perfect opportunity to prove your toughitude. Survival Mode is the name, and it's dead hard. You're expected to battle your way through the ranks of the Streetfighters with only one energy bar! At the end of each round the CPU calculates how good your performance was, how much time it took you and how badly damaged you were and repletes the health bar accordingly. So if you were crap you're in trouble in the next fight. The object is to defeat all the other characters before any of them successfully win a single round against you. Now that's hard.











Decades before joining Streetfighter: The Extravaganza on Ice, Gouki used to perform with the Gouki girls at Soho's famous Windmill theatre. He's still not lost that suppleness or the ability to perform a jolly routine.









THE NEW BOYS

Nobody is really that new, apart from Sakura who is best described as a female Ryu wannabe. The others turn up in previous Capcom fighting games in some form or another.













scores

GRAPHICS Sharp sprites shift around on detailed backdrops, all awash with loads of colour. More animation frames per character than the previous game too. A glorious marriage of detail and delicacy. Hem hem.

92

SOUND Hardly likely to pick up and Ivor Novello, but professional and an improvement on the previous renditions. The effects are well sampled and surprisingly varied for a combat game.

88

PLAYABILITY There's stacks to this game. Capcom utilising the longevity tricks associated with Sega games: training and ranking mode, .and you'll love it unless maybe you don't have a second player to fight against.

95

LASTABILITY For thosew who have had thir fill of Streetfighter, boredom may set in quickly. The secret of its longevity is honing your skills in one-player for human contests. So you need another human.

91

overall

Not sufficiently different from the original to make it an essential, but good enough in its own right to get our seal of approval.

94

review

Game Name	Robo Pit		
Publisher	THQ		
Release	Out now	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Combat		
Import?	✕	Linkplay? ✕	Players 1–2
Control	Joypad		
Background	THQ's second Jap next gen title after In the Hunt.		

Robots – we all love 'em really don't we? Ok, so they might put thousands of people out of jobs and in a sudden flash of independent consciousness try to destroy their human creators, but we love 'em all the same. Here's some in Robo Pit...

One of the main reasons for having robots around is to get them to do those things that we decadent humans can't be bothered with. Stuff like cleaning the house, cooking meals, and of course, fighting to the death. In Robo Pit, it's the later that concerns us with cute Japanese style robot warriors taking each other on in a variety of arenas.But before you can start fighting you'll need to construct your robot. This involves selecting a body, legs (of a sort), arms and those all important eyes. Once that's out of the way it's into battle against a hundred other mech-types. Obviously you don't fight them all at once – all of the battles are one-on-one affairs with the victor acquiring the other robots' most useful parts, be that its gun arms, spring legs or whatever else might be valuable. These are then converted into power points which make your robot a more awesome warrior and thus more capable of moving up the rankings chart.





ROBO PIT









WE WILL REBUILD HIM

So there you are, someone who probably couldn't put a B&Q bookcase together, and you're being charged with constructing your own robot?! Well, fear not because it's all very easy. To start with a player chooses the body from a range of shapes and weights, heavier bodies being more durable but slower with it. Then it's a choice of eyes which, to be honest, are included for aesthetic reasons only. Then it's the faithful arms – there are gun arms, swords, lances, shields or simple boxing fists – and finally on to the legs, which aren't really legs at all, but anything from a spring to caterpillar tracks. Once you're happy with all that, and have given your robot a nice name like Frank, you can enter the fray.

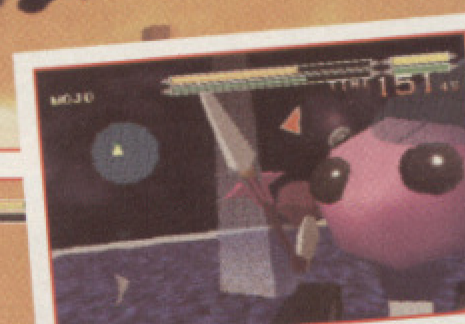
comment

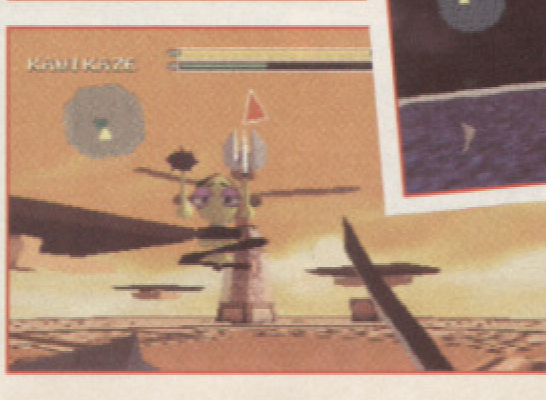


MATT

To call Robo Pit's gameplay shallow would be an understatement at the very least. At times it feels shallow to the point of evaporating into thin air. The novelty of putting together your robot seems like fun at first, as does the principle of picking up the spoils of victory from your foe, but the combat itself is dire. Moving about an arena seems largely pointless because all it comes down to is confronting your opponent head-on and bashing each other until one of the robot's power bars is sucked dry. Add to this the fact that moving up the ranking is ridiculously easy and you're left with a game that's as dull as it is pointless.









scores

GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	52
LASTABILITY	47

overall

What seemed like quite a novel idea at first is quickly destroyed by relentlessly banal gameplay. Consign it to the bin.

50

review

Game Name	Earthworm Jim 2				
Publisher	Virgin				
Release	October	Price	TBA		
Game Style	Platform				
Import?	✕	Linkplay?	✕	Players	1
Control	Joypad				
Background	A not-that-enhanced version of EWJ2, not from Shiny				

Given the amount of success enjoyed by Shiny Entertainment since their inception it's surprising how unproductive they've been in the games creation department. In fact, I'm beginning to suspect that Shiny is actually run by Earthworm Jim, in a robotic business suit which makes him really good at management, and Dave Perry is in fact merely a character he's knocked up.



You can imagine the scene in the boardroom, as the narcissitic invertebrate draws up development sketches of Dave meeting journos, writing games about Jim's heroics and diriving his nice car. Then these are handed over to the producers who create the convincing and interactive Dave Perry software with which to fox the game-playing public. In the meantime our slithering, garden-aerating pal rakes in the cash on the back of platform games about himself.

If this is true, Jim obviously hasn't been very busy saving the universe recently, as his debut Saturn appearance is merely a re-run of his last Megadrive outing. But with all-new 32-BIT enhaned graphics and sound, along with a nice rendered picture to go with the loading screen between levels. So is it worth the price of admission, or what?





EARTHWORM JIM 2













ANIMALYMPICS

Those wacky Shiny guys just don't know when to stop putting anmimals in their games. Jim 2 stars a collection of critters, some, like Jim and his enemy Psy-Crow, are of the funny cartoon talking variety. Others are just regular cows and pigs. They always play a part in the gameplay, no matter how obscure it is. Slide pigs down chutes! Stop cows from being kidnapped by UFOs! Free hamsters from their little wheels! The farmyward fun never ends.













comment



MATT

I really liked Earthworm Jim when it was first released on the Megadrive over a year ago. I can't help thinking, though, that Shiny could have done more with both the character and the console for the Saturn. Whilst the graphics are highly detailed and beautifully shaded, many of the sprites appear small and unclear and the colour schemes for most of the levels are pretty similar, which gives things a samey look. Whislt there's planty of variation in the gameplay, it still essentially looks and plays like a 16-BIT game. It's okay – certainly more fun than some of the crock that's disgraced the Saturn, but I wish Shiny would have pulled their collective finger out and delivered the masterpiece they're doubtless capable of.

scores

GRAPHICS	76
SOUND	67
PLAYABILITY	72
LASTABILITY	78

overall

An excellent Megadrive game which makes a pretty boringly average Saturn game. Hopefully Shiny's new titles will be something to get excited about.

70

Review

How's Jim? That's the riddle.

Review

review

Game Name	Darius				
Publisher	Sega				
Release	Out Now	Price	£39.99		
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up				
Import?	X	Linkplay?	X	Players	1-2
Control	Joypad				
Background	Follow-up tp Darius, released by Acclaim. Also, the same as ancient arcade game Sagaia, also from Taito.				

Of all the creatures in the world to fear, nothing inspire less terror than the fish.

Let's face it, aside from notable exceptions such as the shark, fish aren't very scary. The old Mafia threat of "sleeping with the fishes" has always confused me. What's so scary about finding a cluster of halibut in your bed, exactly? Unless, of course, the fish in question are the giant robot fish monsters from Darius. Twenty stories high and armed with laser cannons, these piscine denizens of the deep are substantially more frightening than the common or garden goldfish, armed only with a five-second memory.

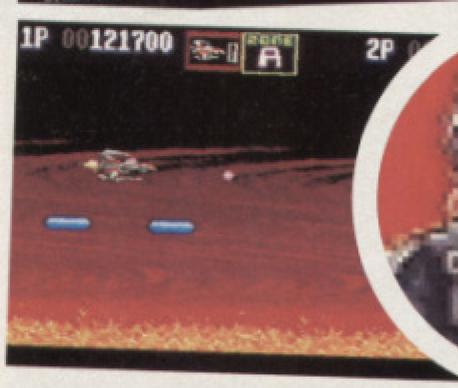
And a good job too, because it'd be a pretty poor shoot 'em up which asks the player to gun down shoals of innocent fishies. No, Darius 2 puts you up against legions of flying cods with guns, which are far more challenging. Many stages of gill-stuffed slaughter await the lucky Darius 2 owner, and a friend if one feels like joining in. Go on. It'll only take half as long to complete then. And you can take it to the games exchange straight away.

DARIUS II



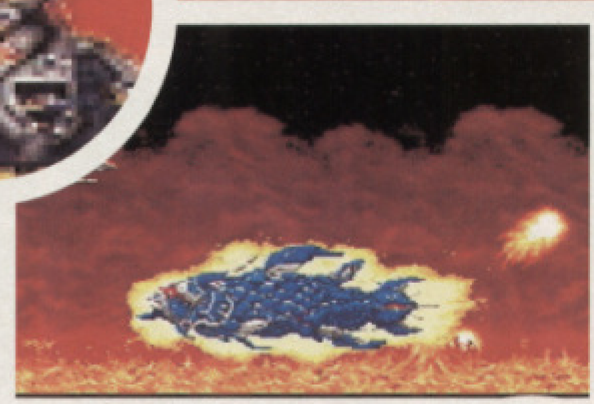


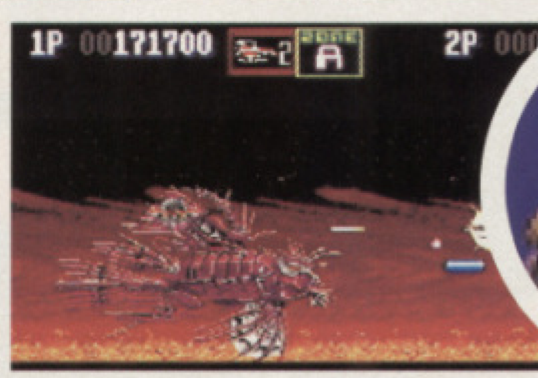














ZONE OFFENCE

Like Darius, the game is split into a series of space-hopping (not the rubber toy) zones graced with one particularly massive finny boss. Finishing each zone gives you a choice between two following areas, making for multiple paths through the game.

comment



GUS

The first Darius title, whilst anachronistic for the Saturn, at least justified its existence by being a frenetic old-school blaster featuring enormous enemies and loads of excellent visual effects. Sadly the programmers seem to have ditched this concept for the sequel, saddling us instead with a slow-moving battle against about two enemies at a time. The challenge comes mainly from the pointless zoom function, which displays the combat in either Too Big or Too Small modes. When a console is capable of Panzer Dragoon Zwei it's disappointing to see it pootling along with a limp and unexciting slice of dulldom like Darius 2. No more like this, please.

FAR OUT, MAN

Darius 2 differs from the original in one major respect. This title features a zoom function, which allows you to close in on the action, or pull out if you want to see the big picture of what's going on in "widescreen" (ie – letterbox). The idea is that this enables the player to avoid loas of bullets (in close-up) and kill tonnes of enemies (in far-out). But it doesn't. It just means you can't see anything on screen except your ship (in close-up) or you can only see microscopic dots which lose themselves in the background (in far-out). Another victory for common sense.



scores

GRAPHICS	40
SOUND	38
PLAYABILITY	41
LASTABILITY	29

overall

A truly second rate game that should be avoided at all costs. Save your cash until Team 17's X2 appears.

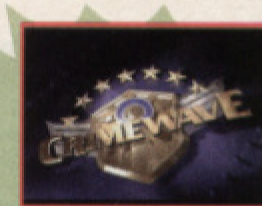
36

review

Game Name	Crime Wave
Publisher	Eidos
Release	November
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Driving/Shoot-'em-up
Import?	✗
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	Domark's in-house team deliver dangerous driving.

Drivin', shootin' 'n' killin'. Saturn owners get the best of all three worlds in this explosive 3D isometric ram-raider. Call the cops!

With 'Road Rage' literally all the rage these days, it was probably inevitable that some bright spark would produce a game allowing frustrated car owners to fully vent their pent-up aggression. Well, thanks to those cheery folks at Eidos Interactive, all you Travis Bickle types can now take to the streets, fully tooled-up and ready to tear up that asphalt.
Crime Wave is set in the futuristic city of Mekee where the level of violence has reached such an extreme level that even taxi drivers are earning extra bucks from bumping off bad guys. Employed as an Enforcer, you drive through eight dangerous locations in search of potential victims. Locate your target, home in on 'em then blow 'em to pieces. Eat lead sucker!



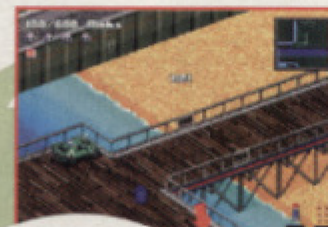


CRIMEWAVE

Bounty hunters in Skoda City

Call me a cab

Forget whiplash aerials, leopard skin seat covers and go-faster stripes, every vehicle in Crime Wave packs more optional extras than that old Ford Cortina your mate Barry drives. From the standard short-ranged machine gun, players can upgrade their cars by adding rockets, homing missiles and lethal mines. Once a target has been vaporised, simply pick up the extra firepower, fuel and armour left behind.







You're approaching a busy T-junction. A bus pulls out from the left. Do you A) slow and signal? B) Unleash a couple of missiles



You are in a 30MPH zone when a car spontaneously combusts in front of you. Which lane should you be in?







Road hogs

Players need to keep their eyes peeled for rival bounty hunting cars and even crazy, law-abiding citizens. These flammin' Sunday drivers often swerve all over the road and seem completely unaware of traffic lights and even other vehicles. Taking out opponents is fair game but blow up the locals and you'll be penalised vital credits which allow passage to further stages.



The motors look slightly better in the intro than they do in the game.

comment



MATT

The basic idea behind Crime Wave is certainly sound enough but unfortunately once you've seen one mangled, twisted car wreck, you've seen 'em all. It certainly takes a while to master the road-handling of your missile-mounted motor but each hit soon becomes increasingly repetitive. However, for those of you thinking this game is basically Micro Machines with guns, then think again. The addition of the two-player mode certainly gives Crime Wave the added longevity it needs and there are enough wheel-spinning, action-packed moments to keep you glued to the screens for a while at least . A less sluggish frame rate, the ability to damage the local scenery and tighter controls would have undoubtedly made this Saturn title a real winner.

comment



GUS

After I'd got used to the controls, I actually quite enjoyed Crime Wave. The action does get a bit repetitive, but after a stressful trip home during rush hour it's fun to vent your anger on the hapless pixelated camper vans that get in your way. The graphics are highly detailed and have a convincing futuristic look but the music is appalling: three repeated chords don't really count as a tune in my book. There are a couple of niggling control points too: it would be nice if you were able to do handbrake turns when your target suddenly changes direction, but otherwise I reckon this is the best car based shoot 'em up on the Saturn.



Just like in real life, the baddies are pursued by a large red arrow.





scores

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	69
PLAYABILITY	82
LASTABILITY	74

overall

Fun after a fashion, although Crime Wave is hardly the most ambitious game idea devised. A pedestrian-paced shoot 'em up behind the wheel.

80

review

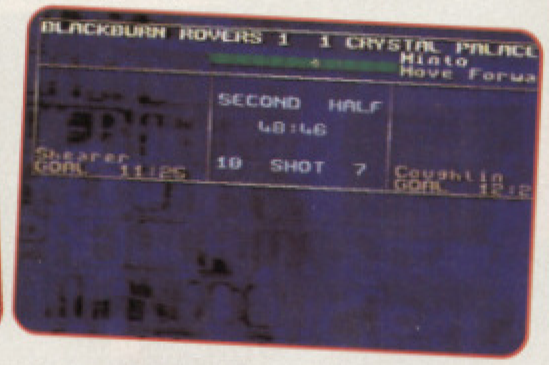
Game Name	Premier Manager '97
Publisher	Sega
Release	November — Price £39.99
Game Style	Strategy/Sports
Import?	✕ — Linkplay? ✕ — Players 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	Manage your way to the top with this fascinating sim.

Football. It's a funny old game. A game of two halves. The beautiful game. Twenty two men running around on a cold, muddy field. Fouls, injuries, drugs, lager, lager, lager, shouting, lager, lager.

Wouldn't it be so much more convenient for the budding virtual player if, instead of risking life and limb on the pitch, they could stand on the touch line wearing the sheepskin coat and shouting "keep it together lads" at the defence? Well good news for all aspiring 16-bit Alex Fergusons, because Premier Manager is back on the Megadrive and it's got a '97 after it.

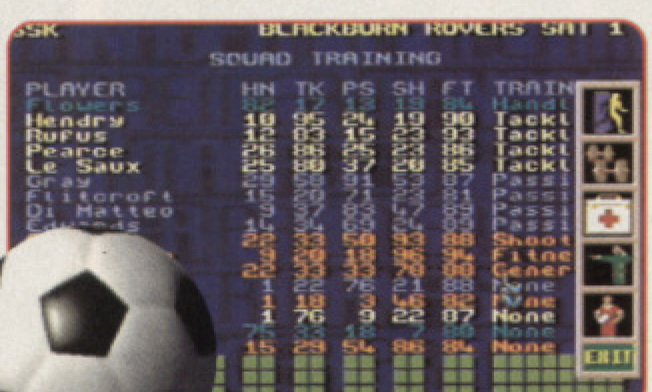


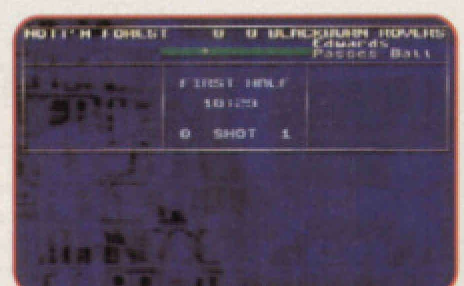


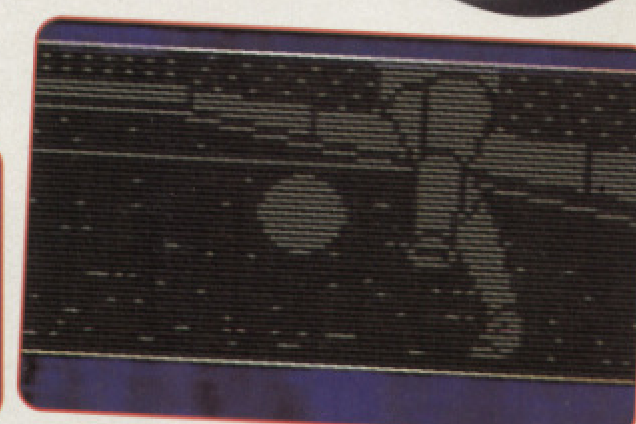




PREMIER '97 MANAGER







OPTION TO OWN

From the main screen you can access, in no particular order, transfer lists, ground improvements, club finances, squad line up, league details, sponsorship opportunities, the job centre, division rankings, save to memory, options, the teleprinter and the all important kick off button. And, hey, they're all useful.









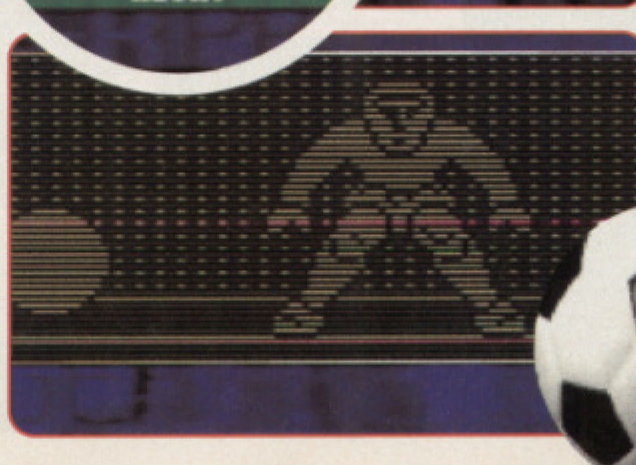
IT'S A BUYER'S MARKET

From the transfer lists, you can buy and sell players to your heart's content. Be warned though, because if another manager has his eye on a player, you're in for a bidding war.



PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Of course you can't start your glorious managerial career at the top, you have to earn it. So in your first season, you have the pick of the third division to manage. Do well and either your team will be promoted Premier-wards or you'll be offered a shiny new contract with a better club, or maybe a 'bung'. Either way, your eventual goal (sorry) is the Premiership and FA Cup.



GET THE BUILDERS IN



At the ground improvement screen, you can elect to upgrade your lowly stadium to an all-seater masterpiece. You need to to play in the Premiership anyway. Supporter's clubs and car parks can be just as important as under-pitch heating if you want to keep the fans coming.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

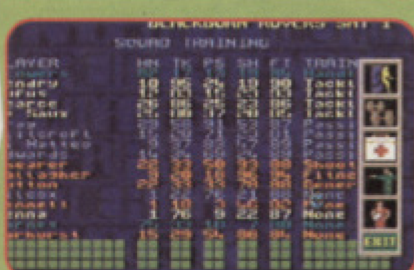
The squad line up screen is where you can select which eleven players you want to use next game. You can also set your formation and tactics from here.





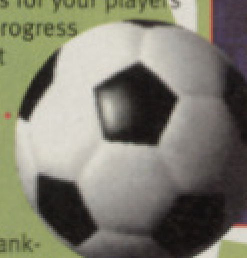
SPONSORED SILENCE

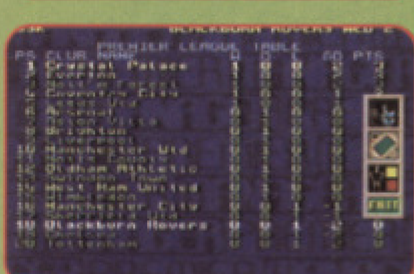
On the sponsorship screen, you can choose which multi-national corporations advertise around your touch line. Expect silliness as ads for fizzy cheese drinks and nut collection services vie for space.



JOB SEEKER'S ALLOWANCE

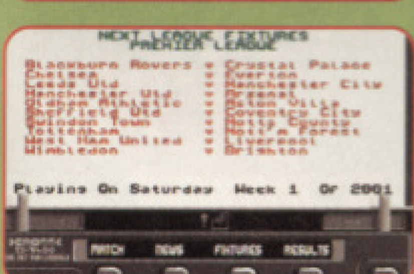
At the job centre you can hire and fire your coaches and physios plus set training regimes for your players and check on the progress of your talent scout and youth team.





LEAGUE TABLES

From the division ranking screen, you can see how you're doing in your league, as well as seeing how your players are doing individually.

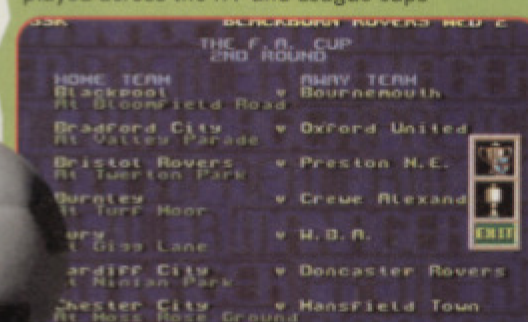


FAX OF LIFE

Your fax machine gives you details of results and fixtures, and is also used as a means of communication between you and your staff. And your bank manager.

UP FOR THE CUP

This screen simply shows the next games to be played across the FA and League cups



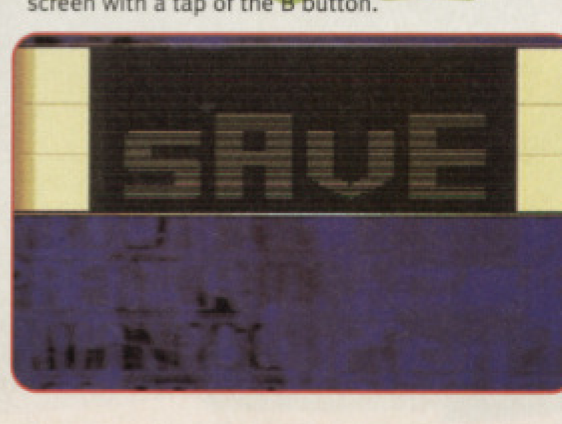
THE DODD SQUAD

From the finances screen you can see just how badly your club is doing fiscally. You can also arrange loans from here.

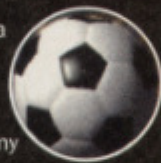


YOU'LL NEVER WALK AGAIN

The actual matches are displayed by a fairly simple screen which shows where the ball is on the pitch, as well as what the player with possession is doing and what the last three major actions caused by, or inflicted on, each team were. When either team makes a shot on goal, a short animated sequence is played. You can set the speed of the game from 'very slow' to 'ultra' and access the substitutes screen with a tap of the B button.



comment



STEVE

Some people get a real kick out of management games. I should know: several of my friends have lost many nights to the Amiga version of this game. However, I can't really see the appeal. It looks and sounds terrible, and the whole thing is weighed down in near pointless statistics and setting the price of hot dogs in the supporter's club. The game is so hard to get into, and it seems as if whatever you do has little or no effect on the progress of your team. If you want a management game you'll love this, but the other 95% of the population probably won't give a toss. Mark McGee does a reasonable job managing the Wolves, so I'll leave him to it.

comment



GUS

If you've never played a Spectrum you won't know of all the tedious fun that comes from football management games, as Kevin Toms' seminal work on the subject was the best game for the system. There's no logic to it, really. The simplest of interfaces, the grimiest of graphics, a bewildering array of options that seem quickly superfluous, but Premier Manager '97 somehow manages to capture the drama involved in raising a struggling side to straddle the greatest league in the land, and make it excellent fun in the process. You should note that there is not a great deal of difference between this and last year's version, bar some updating (although Shearer still plays at Blackburn!).

scores

GRAPHICS — The games is well presented but not really very exciting to look at, with acres of hard-to-read multi-coloured text. In fact, the graphics are complete pants. **36**

SOUND — Virtually no music, in a game that doesn't lend itself to sound but the effects during the matches are authentic. But that's your lot. **24**

PLAYABILITY — The game's complexity makes it initially off-putting – you don't feel you are having much effect. But in the longer term it offers depth and a unique managerial style of gameplay. **80**

LASTABILITY — You will love or hate this kind of game. Lovers will be absorbed into its action for a very long time. Repulsion for the haters should be lifelong. **85**

overall

Premier Manager appeals to a very select audience. If management games hold no appeal for you then buying this would be a particularly brainless manoeuvre.

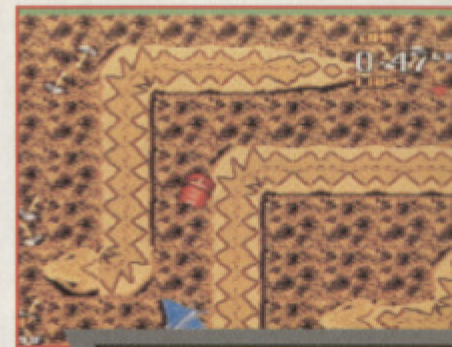
84

review MEGA DRIVE

Game Name	Micro Machines Military		
Publisher	CodeMosters		
Release	November	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Racing		
Import? ✕	Linkplay? ✕	Players	1-8
Control	Joypad		
Background	The fourth MM game with Some gameplay plus guns!.		

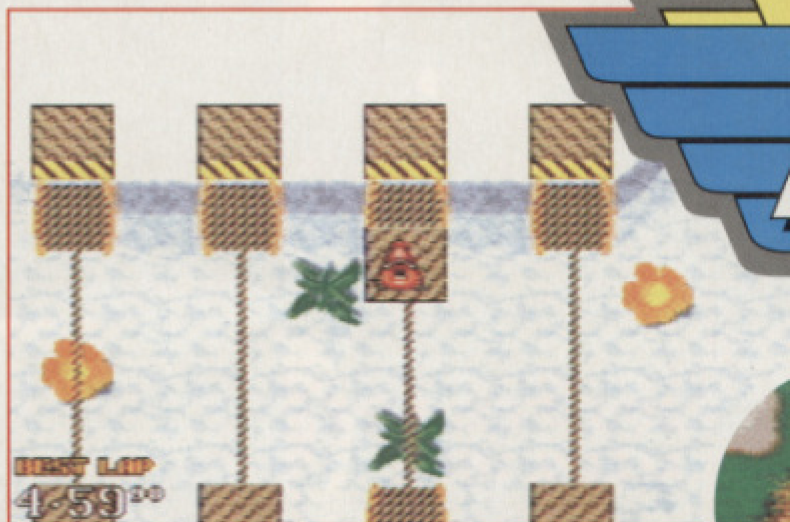
A word of warning, gentle reader... If you enjoy socialising, meeting new people and generally getting out of the house, don't buy this game.

As with its predecessors, Micro Machines Military is one of the most fiendishly addictive games to ever grace the Megadrive. As the earlier Micro Machines games made Codemasters a fortune, it would have been tempting to release another straight sequel. However, this new game adds a vital element to the classic Micro Machines formula: guns. It is now possible to shoot your opponents in the back as they speed off into the distance or leave mines in your tracks to blast vehicles which are bringing up the rear.



A GUY'S GOTTA HAVE OPTIONS

The options screen allows gamers to race against three other human players, against the CPU, in Time Challenges, Battle Arenas or Pro Races. The Battle Arenas dump players on a variety of islands where the only rule is to knock your opponents off the edge using any means necessary. This section can be fun against the CPU, but in multi-player mode it is one of the most enjoyable challenges on the 16-bit.





"Take that!" Use your offensive weapons to slow down opponents.



Ah yes, first place again and yet another trophy for the old cabinet.



Each track boasts many obstacles to avoid at all costs.









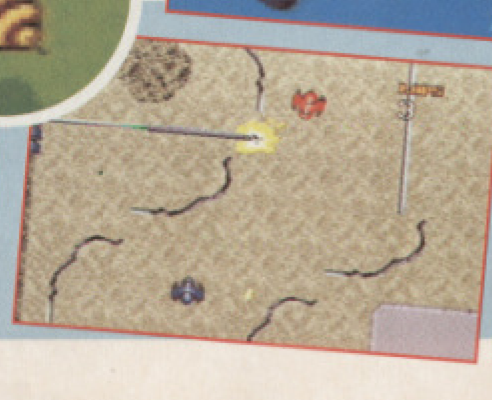


A GOOD BACKGROUND

The 10 new race zones in Micro Machines Military, which are sub-divided into three sections, are undoubtedly the best in the series. The course markers themselves are not as well defined as in the Tournament Edition, making the races more challenging as you speed in the wrong direction only to see your opponents disappearing off the screen. The courses also feature a wealth of interactive elements such as birds, bees, frogs, spud guns and sanders which are all intent on pushing you out of the race.

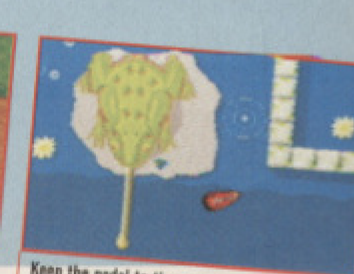




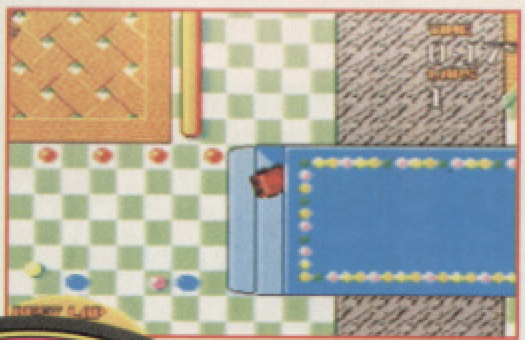


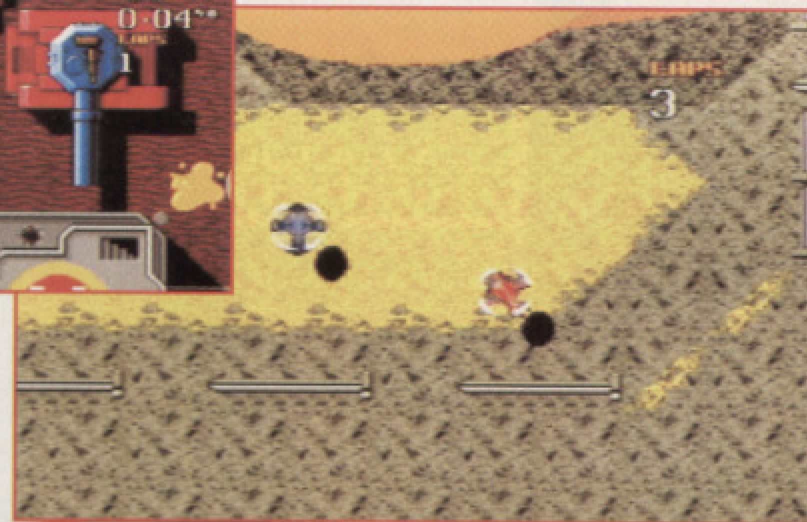


"Stop bugging me, pal!" Watch out for giant insects.



Keep the pedal to the metal and fly round tight bends.





Multi-player modes offer hours of endless entertainment.

THE ORIGINAL oMachines™ SCALE MINIATURES
MILITARY★

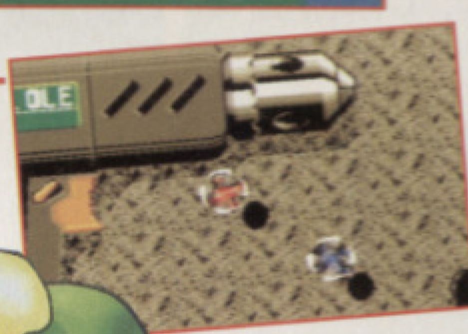




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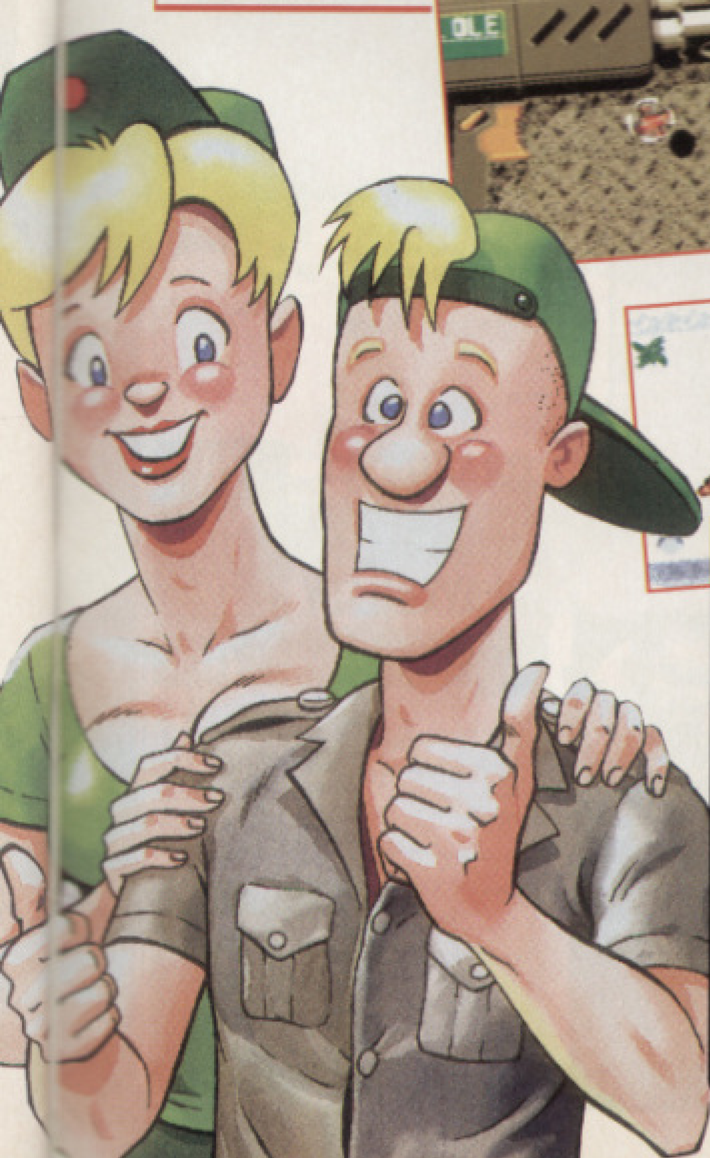



Take out your road rage with Codies superb racer.



MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM

As with earlier MM games, players are given a wide choice of options. As well as CPU and four player action (the cart still features two extra Joypad ports), you can choose Party Play where you have the choice of 4-8 players sharing Joypads or a massive Knockout table where up to 16 players can compete against each other. These options, more than any other aspect of the game, are the reason why MM Military will offer you months of fun.

comment



MATT

Codies has left the Megadrive in fine form, with the best all-round Micro Machines of them all. The Tournament Edition courses may have been better overall, but adding guns into the mix creates a genuine gameplay innovation, plus the battle mode is more than worth the time spent on it. There are few games these days that drag me away from my Saturn, but Micro Machines Military is one of them.

comment



GUS

Micro Machines Military is sadly the last game in the Megadrive series, Codemasters instead turning its attention to the Saturn platform. However, MM Military is an excellent way to close this chapter. While retaining all the best elements of earlier Micro Machines games, the ability to use guns and mines to foil your opponents is a twist of genius which will have MM fans slobbering with anticipation. The Battle Arenas are also an interesting touch, allowing players to take a break from racing and simply batter the hell out of each other! Micro Machines Military is an essential purchase, but now I just can't wait to see what Supersonic and Codemasters can achieve with 32-bits...

scores

GRAPHICS Nothing much has changed to the simple, traditional Micro Machines style visual , but still as effective. The scrolling is super smooth. Overall not quite up to the imaginative standard of Turbo Tournament.

90

SOUND Very similar to the previous games, a selection of rocky soundtracks, engine noises that a respectable vespa would produce (but not a Sherman tank!) and a military feel to the menu screen choons.

85

PLAYABILITY The gameplay is so instinctive, this is possibly the most fun you can have on a Megadrive. Not easy by any manner of means, with the later courses requiring plenty of memory work.

93

LASTABILITY The range of multi-player options means the game could last you forever. Micro Machines comes into its own with three or four players. The special military options are cake icing.

91

overall

A cunning twist on the Micro Machines legacy without losing any of the series unique appeal. Excellent!

92

review

Game Name	Fifa '97 Gold Edition
Publisher	EA Sports
Release	Out Now
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Sports
Import?	×
Linkplay?	×
Players	1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	EA's classic soccer series receives an all-new upgrade

Arriving in good time to cash-in on the new football season, the latest FIFA game from Electronic Arts is trying to score on the Megadrive.

Plug in the FIFA '97 Gold Edition cart, and, aside from a new title screen, there is little obvious difference from its predecessors. All the normal pre-match options are there - fouls, injuries, off-sides and so on - as well as the same match types (Friendly, Leagues, you know the rest). The main difference in this edition is the option to play indoors. As well as the rolling green pitches, you can hold matches in a wooden gymnasium where the crowd is separated from the action by perspex shields. When playing indoor FIFA, the main feature to master is how the ball bounces higher than on outdoor pitches. However, even though these indoor games are a novel touch, they're hardly enough to class FIFA '97 Gold Edition as a classic amongst football sims.

FIFA 97 gold edition



Go on my son! Take the ball down the wing and set up cool volleys.



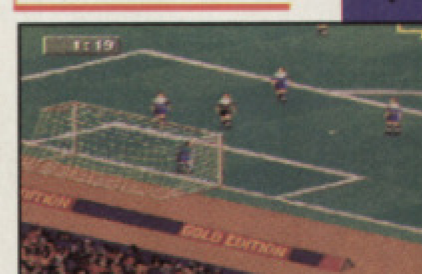




The addition of an indoor arena is a welcome feature.

HONESTLY, I MEANT TO DO THAT!

One problem that has plagued all the FIFA games so far is dodgy ball control. I have lost count of the number of times that I have shot from the halfway line, then witnessed the look of horror on my flat mate's face as their goalie fumbles the save. And what about that strange out-of-control feeling as you watch your team members perform stunts you most certainly haven't instructed? This random element is, sadly, still present in the new version of FIFA and will leave players feeling just as frustrated as ever.

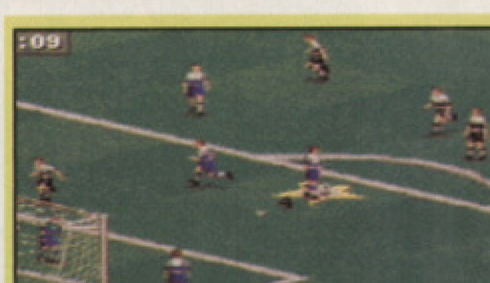


Gameplay is still as tight as ever and fans of the series will find the controls familiar and intuitive.









comment



MATT

Megadrive games need to be different - fact. With an abundance of platforms that promise better graphics and enhanced gameplay, Megadrive developers must be on the lookout for twists that will enhance their games above and beyond their rivals. While the indoor arena in FIFA '97 Gold Edition goes some way towards this, the basic options and gameplay on offer are no different from anything we've seen before. "It's just FIFA, innit?" is a comment that has been flung around the office. And, I must say, I tend to agree...

HARDER, HARDER! FASTER, FASTER!

One significant difference in FIFA '97 Gold Edition is the speed of game play - it is significantly faster than its previous incarnations. Also, whereas in the past it was very easy to steal the ball from your opponents, it is now much more difficult to get possession without skill. Alas, rather than making the game more appealing and realistic, it just makes it frustrating.

comment



GUS

This game is important to you – FIFA '96 and FIFA '95 were last year's top-selling titles. But the addition of an indoor arena is hardly a reason to extend your collection of FIFAs any further. It's fair to say that EA has taken the game as far as it can reasonably go in terms of appearance, and the tinkering with game mechanics may not be to everyone's taste. FIFA '95 is still my recommendation, if you can get it.

scores

GRAPHICS	78
SOUND	78
PLAYABILITY	72
LASTABILITY	70

overall

Unfortunately there are better football sims out there, so look for one that will offer you some thing truly new.

75

review

Game Name	NBA Live '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Release	Out Now
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Basketball
Import?	✕
Linkplay?	✕
Players	1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	It's basketball. Quite simple really.

It's that time of the year again when the sports games get wheeled out for their annual update. Here comes another one; it's NBA Live '97 and it looks distressingly familiar.

Invented by some Americans some time ago, basketball follows the Stateside tradition of borrowing an English sport and changing it a bit, then selling the TV rights for ludicrous amounts of money. Hence, basketball is like netball but with lots of hard black men instead of school girls. There also seems to be a real obsession with stats 'over the pond', so, in this latest offering from EA, players can expect to find Shaquille O'Neal's shoe size and what Scottie Pippen had for breakfast last Thursday.



It's slam dunk action ahoy here as a blue guy 'gets some air' and probably hangs off the rim as well.



Players leap unfeasibly high into the air as the green lot try for a long shot.

comment



GUS

Considering basketball is still very much a minority sport in this country, there wasn't really much hope for this game. The graphics are starting to show their age a bit now, and, on occasion, the players appear to be 'floating' above the court. But the thing that really gets on my wick about NBA Live '97 is that it's the same as every NBA Live game ever and as such offers no incentive to purchase it whatsoever. If you must have a basketball game, look for an older version at a budget price.

Trivial pursuits

NBA Live '97 uses the isometric viewpoint last seen in, well, NBA Live '96 actually. So what's new in this edition? At half time, trivia questions appear and you have the next quarter to think about them before the answer comes up. And, apart from that not entirely earth shattering addition, updated teams for the current season are all this new upgrade has to offer over previous incarnations of the game.



comment



MATT

have to agree with Steve, EA is the king of quality sports games yet NBA Live '97 lacks the finished, professional quality we've come to expect from this renowned software company. With the likes of NBA Jam proving that basketball games still sell on home consoles, this annual upgrade should have received more than just a lick of paint. Maybe it's time the series leapt to Saturn and enjoyed an injection of 32 bit power?





It's the player editor. As you can see, Nobby here is a bit of a tall 'un.



Absolutely nothing of note appears to happening here. But then I did the grabs, so I've only got myself to blame really...

Making it up as you go along

On the options screen you have the opportunity to create your own custom teams and players. Obviously there is plenty of potential for hilarity here as you are able to create teams populated by 300lb midgets called Frank. Assembling custom teams from the existing NBA league players is a bit of gamble because, unless you have an encyclopaedic knowledge of stats, you could quite easily end up with a 'dream team' worse than many of the top real teams.

scores

GRAPHICS	80
SOUND	84
PLAYABILITY	82
LASTABILITY	74

overall

This update tarnishes EA's reputation a bit, but it's hard to see how an original angle could be taken with a Megadrive basketball game. Try NBA Jam instead.

75

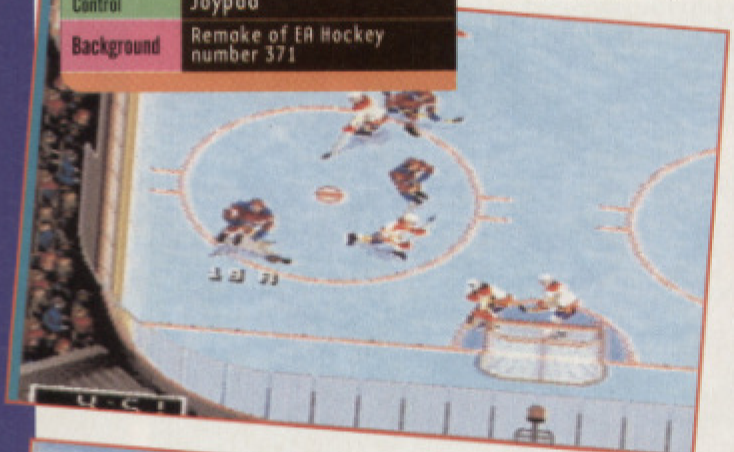
review

Game Name	NHL '97
Publisher	EA Sports
Release	Out Now
Price	£34.99
Game Style	Ice Hockey Sim
Import?	✕
Linkplay?	✕
Players	1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	Remake of EA Hockey number 371

Saturn owners have been well served with ice hockey sims recently. But what about us poor, loyal, Megadrive owners?

Although limited by the 16-bit platform, EA has made a stunning job of capturing the atmosphere, speed and violence of the real game. As the teams face-off, an expectant silence falls over the crowd and you find your finger twitching as you wait for the puck to hit the ice. The game itself moves at a breakneck speed and it is sometimes hard to follow the movement of the puck, just like the real thing. Plus the great 'ooof!'s and 'ahhh!'s uttered by the players as they get a smack in the mouth are a constant reminder of the thrills and dangers of the sport...

NHL 97





This is technically known as a face-off, for obvious reasons.

GIVING IT SOME STICK

The most impressive element of NHL '97 is the range of options offered. Game types include Transactions where you can trade players, sign free agents or even create a player of your own. The Skills Challenge allows you to practice puck control around a series of cones, accuracy shooting by hitting the puck at a range of targets or goal skills against rapid CPU fire. Shootouts can also be played, as well as New Seasons, New Playoffs and Regular Games. It's what you expect of an EA sports sim, really.



Goalmouth frenzy

Going for your advanced Skater's licence, with the riotous Skills Challenge option.







comment



GUS

With sports games it comes down to playability, and NHL '97 has as much of it as any Saturn disc, or Playstation for that matter. But many of you will have previous versions of this game, and EA are hardly disguising it as an update of the old engine. Still, you can buy it in the knowledge of getting an excellent sports simulation.



Whoops-a-daisy!





The best version of Hockey...yet.



Many a slip 'twixt puck and goal.

comment



MATT

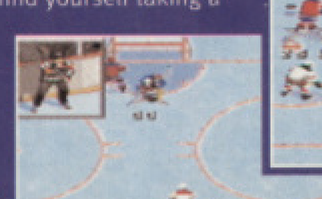
NHL '97 is definitely one of the most entertaining sports sims on the Megadrive at the moment. Instead of simply producing a basic ice hockey game, EA has made the effort to provide new options such as Transactions which give you a wider view of how the sport operates and a Practice mode to hone your skills to perfection. Chances are that you will come away thinking that you have learnt something about the sport and how it is run, rather than the disappointment you get with so many sims that have not managed to capture the thrills of the real game. A worthy rival to the 32-bit wonders.

JUST LIKE BEING THERE

The action of the players in NHL '97 is ultra convincing. In fact, it takes time to get used to skating on the slippery surface and you may find yourself taking a severe beating from the CPU teams before you get up to speed. However, once you have mastered the game, get some mates around and watch them flail around the arena as you run rings around their players...







Some actual 'flailing around the arena'.

scores

GRAPHICS	82
SOUND	85
PLAYABILITY	87
LASTABILITY	85

overall

An intelligent and enjoyable sports sim with enough options to keep fans of the sport and newcomers alike interested for a long time.

85

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PREVIEWS

An eclectic selection of forthcoming games this month to kick off the new 'rolling preview' section. Look ahead for Command and Conquer, RPG antics in Riglord Saga 2, the umpteenth Scorcher update and the strangest game concept for many a year, Mr Bones.

preview

Game Name	Virtua Fighter 2
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Sega
Release	December

VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 (MEGADRIVE)



Who needs polygons when you can produce the VF2-style menu screens in glorious 16-bit bit-maps?

It looks magnificent, doesn't it? The quality of these screenshots may shock, but to be fair, they are only part of the story. To give Sega their due, they've brought Virtua Fighter as close to the Megadrive as is reasonably possible, and without the aid of any extra cartridge power.

Sega have dithered over the name since they announced the project at E3, back in May, first calling it Virtua Fighter. The transition to Virtua Fighter 2 was meant to herald the addition of the two extra fighters in that edition, Shun Di and Lion Rafale. However, due to memory restrictions, this has not happened, and Virtua Fighter 2 has, somewhat confusingly, the original line-up of characters. However, the game's look is very definitely VF2, with stunningly accurate backdrops and detailed characters.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

The version previewed here needed a good burst of extra speed, and Sega are aiming to do this, by 'optimising' a Megadrive game for the first time. This process, now standard for Saturn titles, involves working through the code getting the most out of the processor. Hopefully VF2 will run at a fair luck after this procedure.



So, as that Irish twat would say, How Did They Do That? Well, the game is most definitely a 2D beat 'em up, with no scaling backgrounds or changing camera views, like the 32X version. The benefit of this is that the programmers have been able to produce lavish environments and excellent character animation, and most of the 700 plus VF2 moves.

The game mechanics are exactly as they always were, with multiple combos, ring outs and custom versus mode, and plays very much like the 'real' VF2, where the action is always on two planes anyway. At this time, there was no evidence of a ranking mode or Dural cheat, but this may appear in time for next month's review.

COLOUR SCENE

The restrictions of cartridge has meant limiting the range of backdrops, but the programmers have got around this by doing multiple versions of the same scene using different colour palletes, thus there is a 'daytime' and 'evening' version of Jeffry's tropical island stage.

AKIRA



JACKY



JEFFRY



KAGE-MARU



ARCADIA

Welcome to Arcadia, Mean Machines Sega's very own up-to-the-minute coin-op section. If you're looking for the very latest, accurate information on state-of-the-art arcade machines then you've come to the right place. This month we visited the Associated Leisure Preview in Hammersmith and tested out the hottest new releases coming soon to an arcade near you...





MYSTARIA 2

Sega's continuing commitment to its RPG audience is underlined by their plan to convert the second Riglord Saga game, to be released here as Mystaria 2. The original Mystaria is almost a year old, and won fans with its Shining Force-style battle RPG gameplay. This is adventuring mixed with war gaming, as characters are moved like chess pieces across a grid laid on varying battle landscapes.

In common with the first game, the second has dozens of characters and literally hundreds of special weapon and magical attacks. The adventure is driven by a conventional kind of Sword and Sorcery plot — lands under threat from ancient evils risen from alternate dimensions — that kind of stuff.

Fans of the original will notice the subtle reworking of the game's mechanics and a new style of graphics, with less cartoony characters. The isometric 3D, which is used to create all the in-game landscapes is more sophisticated than the first game (though still prone to some jerkiness), and the poor excuses for towns in the first game have been replaced by fully-fledged settlement environments. Also, a lot of the character utterances have been recorded by voice actors, an aspect that may delay the translation into English further. However, Sega are still aiming for a pre-Christmas release.

preview

Game Name	Mystaria 2
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Micro Cabin
Release	December



New heroes embark on the disco dancefloor quest we know as Mystaria part 2.



SEGA TOURING CAR

We took a quick look at Sega's amazing new arcade racer last issue and the more we've played Touring Car, the more we're impressed. The actual programming and development of this title has been undertaken by AM4 (a new division within Sega's coin-op department) and their initial efforts are certainly a wonder to behold. Touring Car manages to combine the smooth visual style of Sega Rally with the overall vehicle handling of Daytona. Currently, only two player link-up machines are being produced but if the success of Sega's other racers is anything to go by we can expect four and eight player cabinets to appear in the not too distant future.





MYSTARIA 2





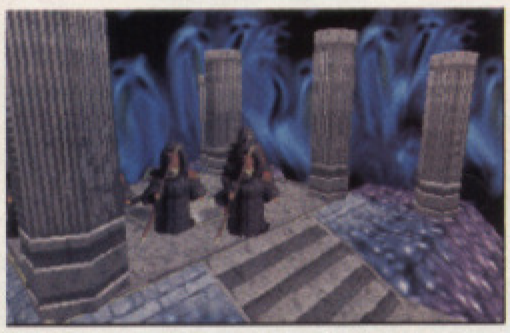
RPG fans are going to go ballistic when they play Mystaria 2. Like its predecessor, there's loads of questing and magical spell-casting.



DRAWING ON INSPIRATION

Like the previous Mystaria, the artwork displayed in this game is of exceptionally high quality. All the characters make an apperance as abstract loading screens.





Hey, what are you guys looking at? These aren't dresses you know. Why they're er...robes. Yeah, that's right robes. We're real men alright.



Inbetween battles and villages, players guide their heroes around this enchanted world with the aid of a handy overhead map.

TOSHINDEN URA



Tired old tussler or fresh-faced fighter? Yet another 3D Saturn beat-'em-up arrives later this month but this one's frighteningly familiar.

preview

Game Name	Toshinden URA
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Takara
Release	November





The lukewarm response Takara's first fighter generated would usually be enough to put off even the bravest software companies. Unperturbed by snide comments and cruel jibes, those plucky Toshinden development types have gone back to the drawing board and given their bouncing baby a bit of a spit-and-polish. The result is a refined version of the game that now runs in the Saturn's high-res mode, with a handful of exclusive extras included to silence those cries of "You're really milking this game, aren't you?" Players can expect Toshinden URA (that's Ultimate Revenge Attack to you and me) to deliver improved character visuals, a bevy of extra moves and the addition of two brand-spanking new combatants, Ripper and Ronron. If you were a fan of the original then this game will no doubt keep you occupied until Takara gets round to releasing a true sequel and not merely a simple upgrade. Lucky old Mean Machines readers can look forward to a full review next issue.

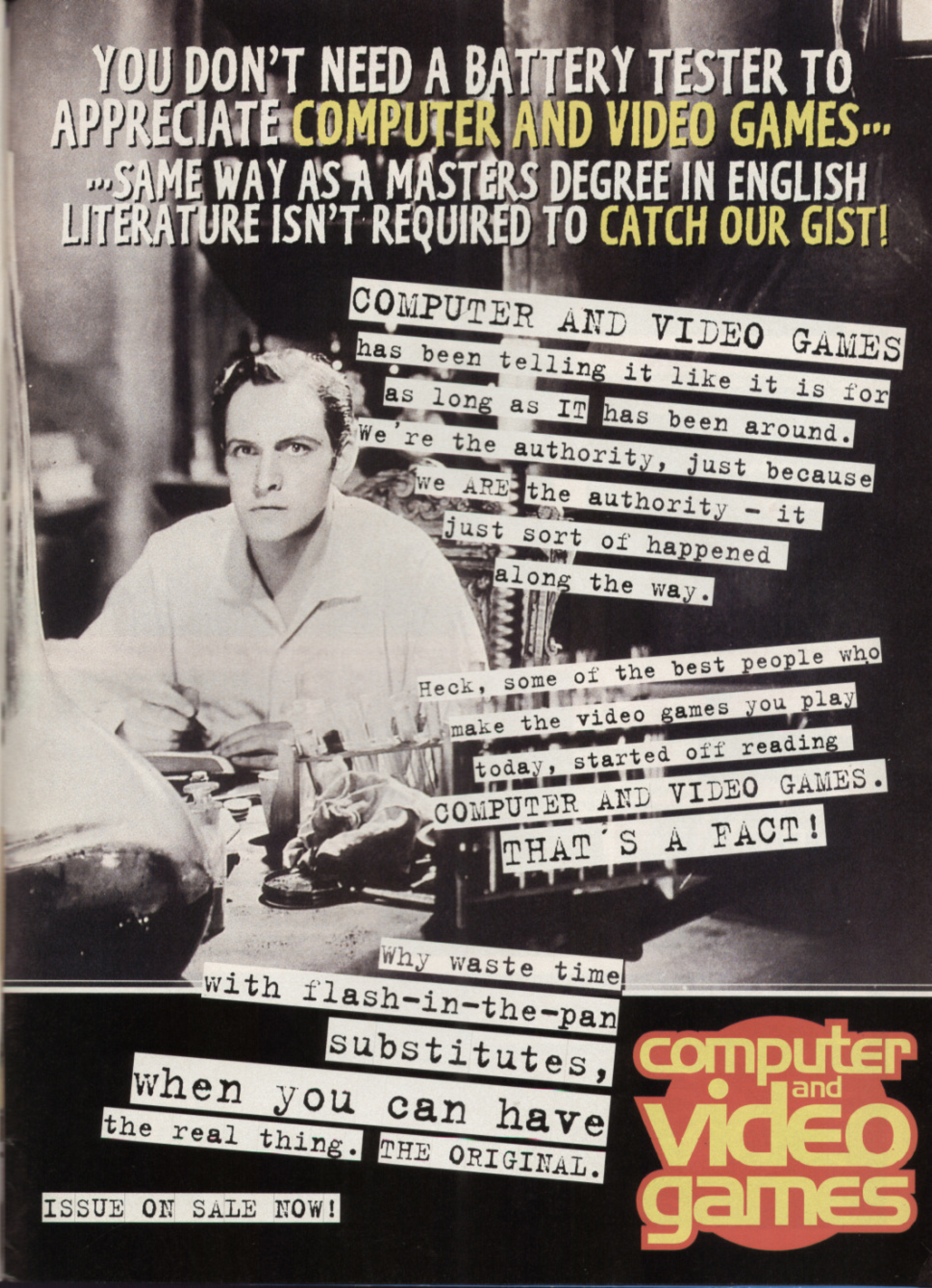


Smash and grab

As well as a full repertoire of punches and kicks, each fighter boasts many special moves ranging from pyrotechnic fireballs to complicated throws. If that's not enough to satisfy your insatiable bloodlust then check out the Overdrive Gauge. Located at the bottom of the screen, this super meter fills up as attacks are unleashed. A fully powered-up bar enables spectacular assaults to be delivered.

Character Study

The entire cast of Toshinden make a welcome return and this time around they're joined by two new faces. Ripper is a revenge driven nutter keen to dish out maximum punishment with his lethal blades. Ronron, on the other hand, is a spectacle wearing schoolgirl decked out in an outfit that leaves very little to the imagination!


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preview

Game Name	Command and Conquer
Publisher	Virgin
Developer	Westwoood Studios
Release	December

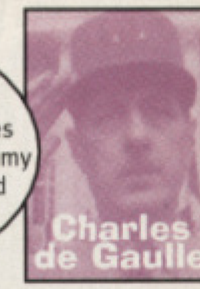
COMMAND AND CONQUER

War. What is it good for? Before you say 'absolutely nothing, I'll say it again', we would like to interject. It's quite good for creating jolly fun strategy games, actually. And to prove the point, here's Westwood Studios conversion of their own PC game, Command and Conquer. In fact you'd be hard pressed to find a bigger hit computer game from last year, as C&C swept the boards garnering both critical and commercial acclaim. This faithful translation to Saturn has players marshalling troops and equipment in a realtime armed struggle between two opposing forces; the GDI and the infamous Brotherhood of NOD, which is run by a shifty bloke with a beard and a temper. No, his name is not Gus.

Virgin have taken a novel and generous approach to picking sides by putting the game onto two discs, one letting you play a series of missions as GDI, the other as NOD. C&C has a rabid following of fans who love its stress-inducing gameplay, and feelings of empowerment as your tanks roll on to victory. Experience it for yourself next month.



Never has so much been put on a disc for so many, or something. Yes, this takes me back to the old days. Tommy Atkins, Vera Lynn. You could leave your back door open, you know.



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

First you command...

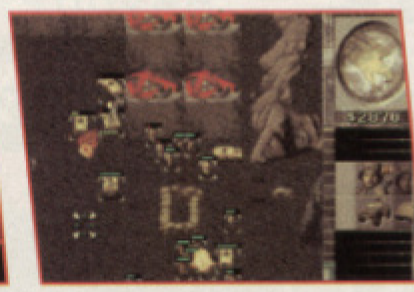
You control your forces by means of a bar. That's a menu bar, not a liquor inducement. The menu bar reveals your building options. However, first you must establish a base with your mobile command vehicle. A base starts as a basic construction yard, but by using the bar you can channel your monetary resources into power plants, Tiberium refineries, vehicle plants, communications centres and more. These will provide the forces you need to go forth, but the base must be protected at all costs!



...Then you conquer

C&C was originally played with a mouse, and the cursor-based interface reflects this. Your forces on the ground; infantrymen, grenadiers, tanks and APVs await your command. Simple button clicks have them move, attack or guard. Some units have specialised functions. Units may be grouped to attack en masse. Although they will respond immediately, your units have a certain amount of intelligence to operate when you're busy elsewhere.









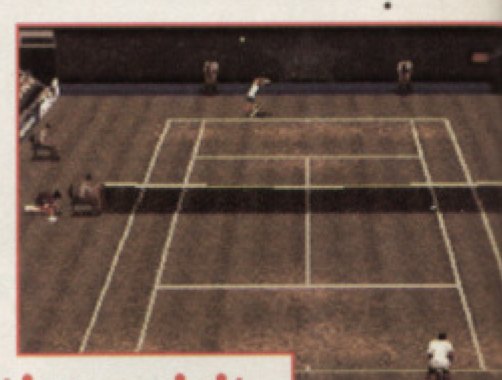


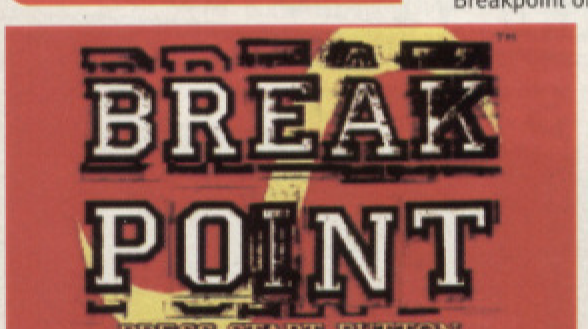
preview

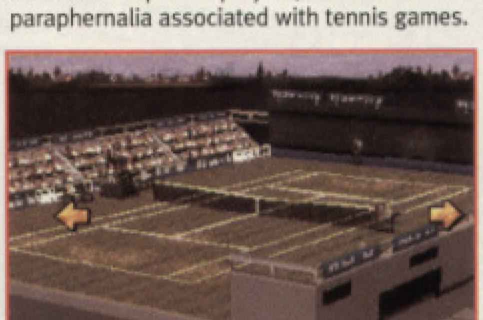
Game Name	Breakpoint
Publisher	Ocean
Developer	Smart Dog
Release	December

Breakpoint

Tennis. That word conjures up images of summer, Wimbledon and strawberries and cream. So quite why those crazy chaps at Ocean have decided to release their new simulation of the sport in December is beyond us. Anyhow, Breakpoint offers motion captured players, various court surfaces and all the other paraphernalia associated with tennis games.







Competitive spirit

There are eight competitors to choose from, although for some reason the British entrant is ranked as 'excellent'. All the players also display individual, and horrendously cliched, personalities; the American 'pumps his fist' a lot while the French contender can be seen attending to his coiffeur. As in most tennis games; clay, grass, asphalt and indoor courts are also available, each in it's own distinctive stadium.

ARCADIA

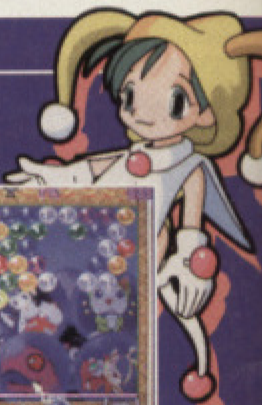




PUZZLE BOBBLE 3

Taito's Puzzle Bobble 3 was also on display at the AL Preview and proved to be every bit as popular as its predecessor. This updated game now includes over 30 stages, new player techniques (such as bouncing bubbles off the ceiling), eight selectable characters to choose from, and a host of exciting new features. There are also special bubbles that can cause chain reactions, colour-changing bubbles and even a Metal Bubble that destroys everything in its path!





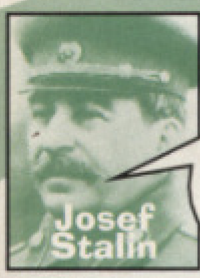


I like this game, ja! Anyone snigger at my moustache, I just send in the tanks. Blitzkrieg, that's my strategy. Ein game! Ein Saturn! Ein Virgin!

Oh la, la. As you know we French are the greatest military nation in the world. We just like to give the other side a bit of a start.

The sands of time

Command and Conquer actually evolved from an earlier game Westwood Studios created called Dune 2: Battle for Arrakis, which was one of the best ever Megadrive games. The evidence? Well, the control system is much the same and there is a similar way of gaining new fiscal resources through 'harvesting'. In Dune 2, you sent out large vehicles to harvest the 'Spice' which was then converted into credits. C&C has you sending out harvesters to collect Tiberium crystals, a valuable global commodity. Spice; Tiberium, the effect is the same — dosh. Needless to say, your production must be protected at all costs.



Dasvodanya, komrades. In my experience there's nothing the proletariat likes more than a good old fashioned war. Except for potatoes maybe. Mmm, potatoes...





preview

Game Name	Scorcher
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Scavenger
Release	January

SCORCHER

As soon as one futuristic post-apocalypse racing game is out the door, along comes another one. Scavenger's latest creation, Scorcher, is packed full of the decaying urban landscapes that are practically compulsory with the post-Wipeout set, but what new features can it offer to lift it above the competition?

A LOAD OF BALLS

The vehicles in Scorcher are not exactly what you'd call conventional. Looking like a cross between a motorbike and those Atlasphere things out of Gladiators, their spherical configuration means they are great for bouncing off walls and for driving up the side of tunnels and stuff.











ROAD WORKS

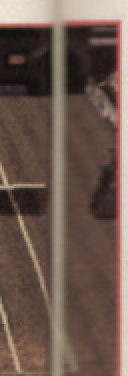
As it's set in a decaying post-apocalyptic landscape, the courses in Scorcher don't always stick to the beaten track. Expect the tarmac to disappear from under you at any moment as you bounce down into sewers and subway tunnels. On the roads that remain intact, rubble and twisted girders offer further hazards.

ALL JUICED UP

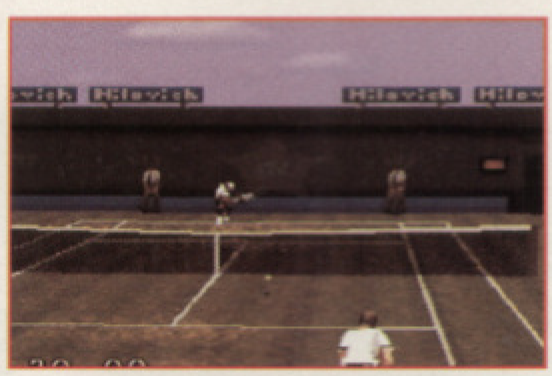
Despite being quite a lot like Wipeout, Scorcher doesn't offer anything in the way of weapons; it's just you and your Atlasphere thing against the other competitors. Power-ups are available, however, in the form of progressive speed boosts. These come in handy, as you are also racing against the clock, arcade style. Whether it all comes together or not will be revealed in January when the game is finally released.











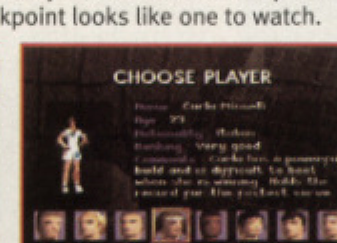
Up for the cup

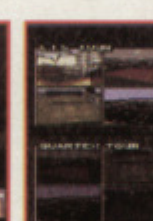
At the title screen you can choose from several play options. Practice mode pits you against a random CPU opponent, whilst singles and doubles matches enable you to select which competitors take part and allow for up to four human players to compete. On top of this there are Super Cup and Tournament modes which offer multi-player knockout competitions. With a wealth of options and nicely animated motion captured graphics, Breakpoint looks like one to watch.

It's all under control

Breakpoint uses a fairly conventional control system; the A, B + C buttons are used for the regular shots while the X, Y + Z button access lobs and other tricky shots that I couldn't quite get the hang of at school. Pressing the L + R buttons together cycles through the three viewpoints available; two TV style views from above and behind your player and the old Super Tennis 'over the shoulder' view.









SIDE BY SIDE

Driving games were everywhere at the show but it wasn't just Sega that boasted some of the finest racing coin-ops. Taito's Side By Side is a four player link-up machine that features incredibly realistic vehicle handling, smooth texture-mapped visuals and a choice of three driving viewpoints. The cars in Side By Side are in fact based on actual marketed vehicles produced by the likes of Toyota, Nissan, Honda and Mazda. How's that for product endorsement?



To anyone offended by the dictator bit — get a life.

preview

Game Name	Mr Bones
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Angel Studios
Release	December

MR BONES

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT

Mr Bones starts the game six feet underground, a shadow of his former living self, but a strange power brings him back to afterlife, and he spends the rest of the game journeying towards each locatios, evading the red-eyed legions of darkness and trying to keep his skeletal figure in one piece. Whenever Mr Bones goes to pieces, he's finished. Mr Bones is a rather mellow individual who finds his salvation in music and by chilling out the various denizens who confront him with the mystical powers of his blues guitar.

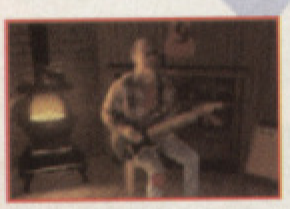
Sega Trivia Fact: of all the games publicised at the original Saturn launch, Mr Bones is the only one yet to be released. In many ways it's Sega's Heart of Darkness (the much-troubled,oft-delayed Virgin game) and has been a 'bone of contention' for some time. It's only natural, though, looking at a near-complete version of one of the most complex productions ever undertaken on the machine.

Where as you could say Virtual On is a typical Sega of Japan game, Mr Bones is the epitome of Sega of America's direction over the last three years. With movie production values and a lot of plot sequences, it delights in using all the new CG (computer generation) techniques for stunning visual effects. It's team also have a bizarre sense of humour, seen in many of the weird sub-games that form the overall quest of its skeleton hero who indulges in that most American of pastimes; playing the blues.



CHOIR OF ANGELS

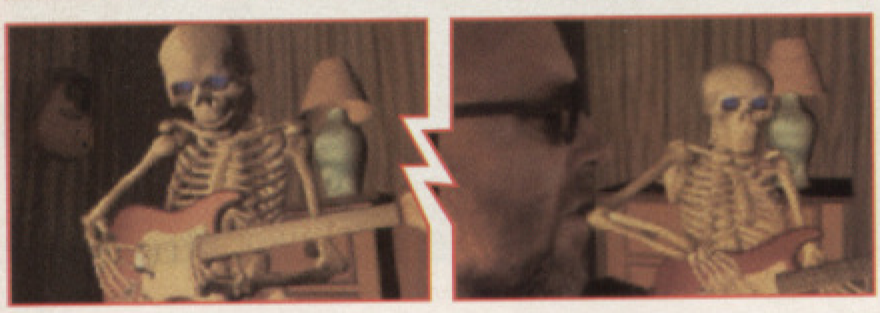
The project is the work, through Segasoft, of Angel Studios who have been at the forefront of computer animation using Silicon Graphics and other high-end CG machines in recent years. Rendered graphics are used throughout, not just for sprites or FMV sequences, but integrated with gameplay to create some stunning high-resolution scenarios, like the guardian of the Dry Moat, seen here.







We still don't know what to make of this massive undertaking, covering two discs, but we'll let you in on it next month, when we review the finished version of Mr Bones.



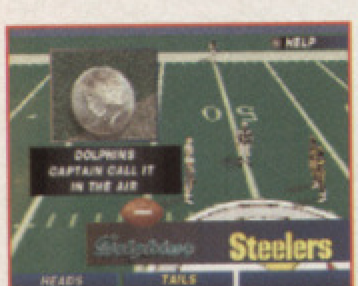




preview

Game Name	Madden '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Electronic Arts
Release	December

MADDEN '97

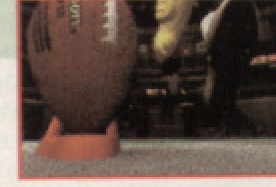


As sure as night follows day, console owners can bet their bottom dollar that there will be annual Madden's Football update for as long as the potato-headed yank is with us. This year's offering, John Madden NFL '97, takes the winning formula of previous games in the series and attempts to offer fans a few new features to sustain the games ever increasing popularity.

For a start, players can now expect a flashy, and completely over-the-top rendered intro sequence to get them in the mood before launching into the game itself. Team stats have always played an important part in Madden titles and EA's latest outing now requires players to keep a close eye on their team's performance as nackered quarterbacks and tired defenders will actually affect the entire game. John Madden NFL '97 has been available on import for a about a month now but UK Saturn owners can expect to receive this transatlantic treat later this month.

ENTER THE MADDEN

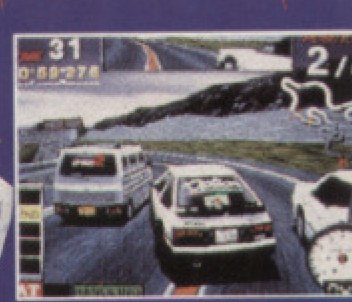
EA's sports titles have always been superbly produced and presentation is usually second-to-none. Of course John Madden NFL '97 is no exception and boasts a superb intro sequence featuring rendered stadiums, players and even an appearance from the big guy himself.





ARCADIA





WINDING HEAT

Also making a welcome return to the arcade scene were Konami with their own driving game, Winding Heat. Unlike traditional racers, this gas-guzzling racer features on-screen obstacles, such as oncoming drivers, and appears to have taken much of its inspiration from Electronic Arts' Need for Speed. Gameplay is fast and furious with a multi-player link-up option adding to the excitement. Oy, Konami! How about giving us loyal Saturn owners a decent Saturn conversion then?

Winding HEAT





KEEPING IT TOGETHER

His leg bone's connected to his knee bone, his knee bone's connected to his shin bone... you get the picture. But Mr Bones often struggles to maintain his bodily structure, which starts to fall apart from all kinds of attack. Then he has a special power which allows his twitching limbs to miraculously reform.

BLUES GUITAR

The strange task here is to play a series of blinding riffs on your blues guitar that keep step with the rhythm guitar in the background, with each joypad button choosing a new riff. If you're successful, the eyes of the skeleton army in the background should gradually change from red to blue.

HALL OF PANE

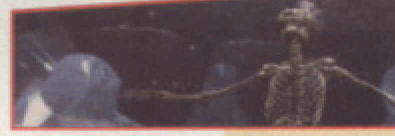
A flying section set in a cavernous series of cathedrals, where the aim is to collect the tokens before smashing through the stained glass windows at the end. Pretty breathtaking.





BIG BONES

Mr Bones plays keep-it-up with his own head — on his own head. You must bounce his small skull through a series of obstacles, then his larger skull will zoom out to become the small skull on a larger head. Looks freaky.


ROLLING LOGS

A lavish working of a simple gameplay idea — avoid logs as they roll down the hill after you. The background and logs, however, are stunningly rendered.

LITTLE PEOPLE VILLAGE

A subtle reworking of the old 'Defender' concept. Mr Bones has befriended a town of lilliputians and he must stop them from being dragged off by the spiders.



THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Mr Bones' weird gameplay forms a portmanteau game — one made up of separate gamestyle sections linked by stories. It's a kind of undead Alice in Wonderland. Some of these are seriously weird, er... stuff, along with more conventional platform and shooting sequences.

DRUM SOLO

A 'panic game' where you work four sets of bongo drums linked to electrical generators. You must play the sets in response to current surges flowing along a series of wires.

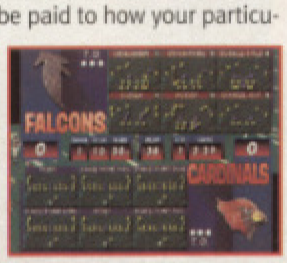


FUNNY BONES

To our knowledge the only video game where telling jokes is part of the gameplay (apart from that bit in Monkey Island). Mr Bones must amuse his skeletal audience by stringing together gags split into a series of recorded sections. Very weird, and the joke Uma Thurman tells in Pulp Fiction is in there too.

THE DREAM TEAM

It's often very tempting for players to skip over the team stats and jump straight into the plays. While there's still plenty of on-screen action to be had, closer attention must be paid to how your particular team is performing. Exhausted players can mean a weaker defence, shorter passes and victory for the opposition.



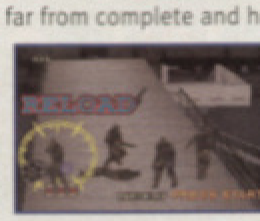
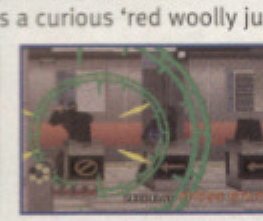



preview

Game Name	Virtua Cop 2
Publisher	Sega
Developer	AM2
Release	November

VIRTUA COP 2

We're updating our VC2 coverage with pics of the third level, available on the latest build. This final stage forms a fitting climax to the game with a stunning train shoot-out en route to the terrorists' base. Also revealed is the 'secret enhancement' AM2 have been talking about in relation to the conversion: it's an extra sub-stage slotted in after the train ride! In the coin-op, stage three did not offer the choice of routes found on the other levels. The Saturn version does, with an 'arcade line' option that takes you along the conventional underground train route, and the alternative 'Saturn Way' which features a car ride similar to the early part of stage one. This part is far from complete and has a curious 'red woolly jumper' effect spoiling the screen at present, hence no pictures. VC2 is on schedule to appear just around our next issue, so stay sharp shooters.

SAMURAI SHODOWN IV



Of course no arcade round-up would be complete without at least one beat-'em-up being mentioned. The recent JAMMA show in Japan saw the first playable version of SNK's Samurai Shodown making a long overdue appearance. The latest game in the long-running series includes every single character that's appeared to date as well as a few familiar faces. There's no word on the exact hardware that's powering this beauty but improved visuals and sound would seem to hint that SNK is playing with some mighty powerful toys. We'll bring you more on this 2D extravaganza next issue.



Next month we'll be celebrating the coming of a fat old bloke who breaks into your house and eats your cake. Yes it's Christmas, when the little baby Jesus arranges for presents for all. To mark this once-a-year-day, and exploit the over-commercialisation of this quasi-religious midwinter festival to our advantage, we're doing a special Christmas and New Year issue. What's on the cards....



Listen up beardy, I don't really know what I want for Xmas. So how about a festive feature to help me plan my Chrimbo list. Which Sega games should I buy, how much are they, what will I get for my hard-earned dosh. Cor, thanks!

Yob!



O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL!



Dear Santa
Please send me a large bowl of fruit with a lit candle behind it, for atmosphere. You could also half-peel an orange and put it in the foreground. Then get some old hag who has done a night-school course in still life drawings to bang out a crappy old picture, stick it on a Christmas card and make a mint selling it to thousands of undiscerning shoppers. Just a suggestion, Santa.

Nick



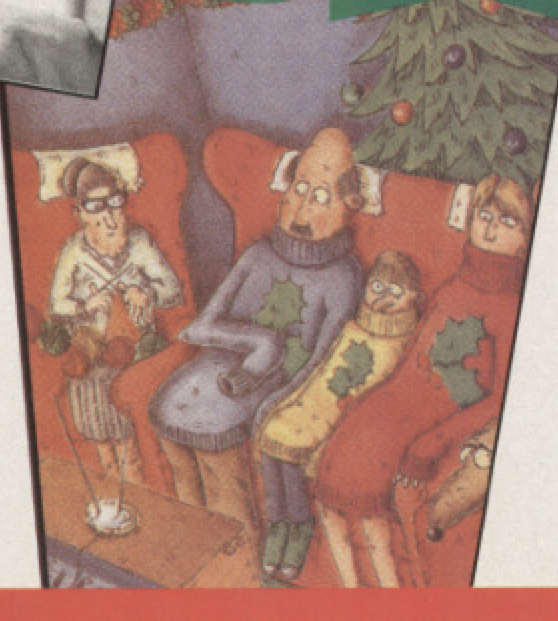
Oi Santa!
I want to see some features. How's about an interview with AM3 on their Virtual On conversion, or a chat with Core on their amazing fighting game. And I want some info on Shining the Holy Ark, that RPG thing from Japan.

Matt



Dear Father Christmas
Please, please, please bring me some reviews for Christmas. All kinds of reviews from Command and Conquer to John Madden Football '97. If you could also find room to put in Breakpoint, ISS Soccer Deluxe and Virtua Fighter 2 on the Megadrive, I promise to clean my desk all year. Honest.

Love Stephen

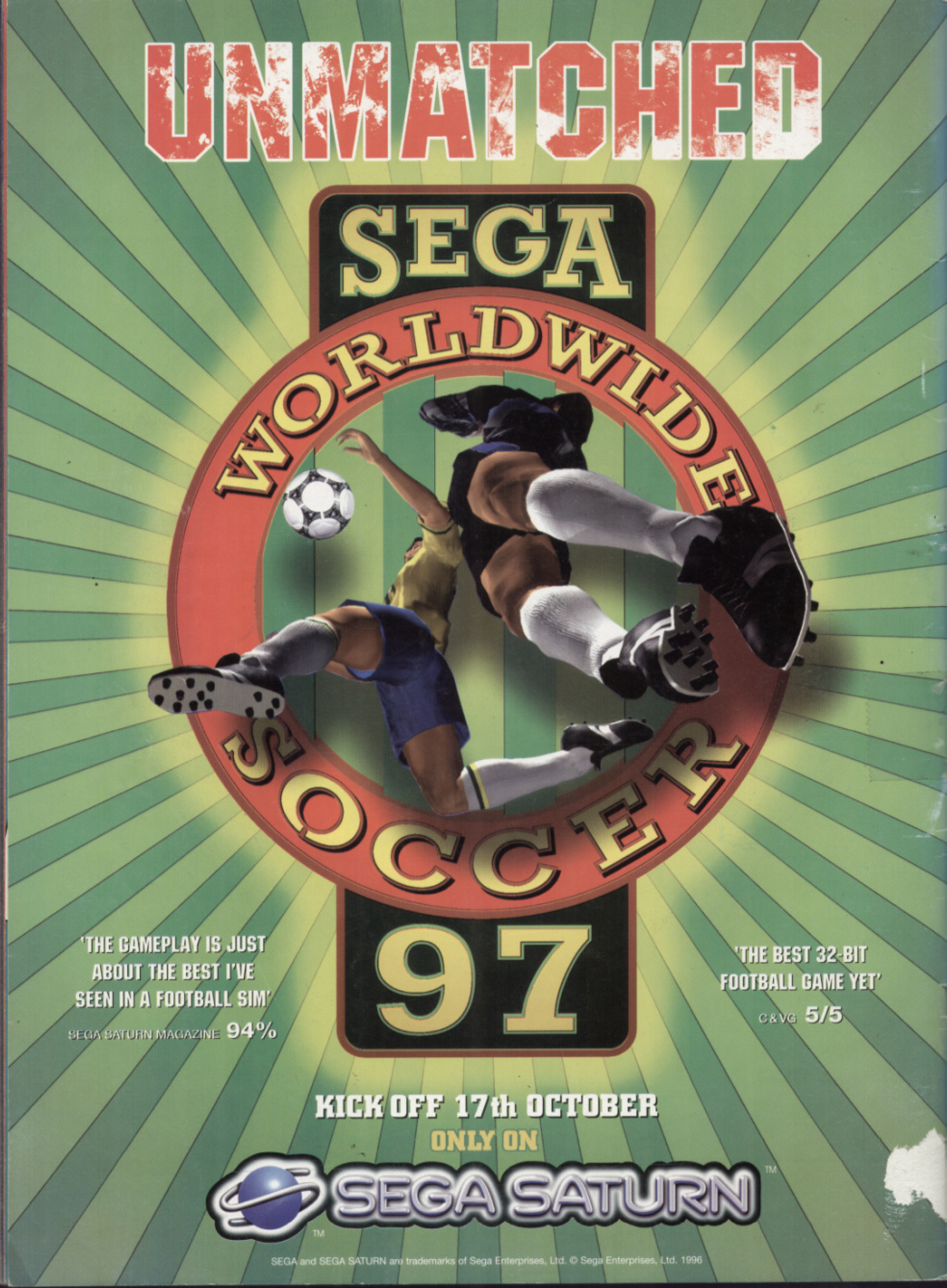


Dear Santa
What I dream of for Christmas is a copy of Christmas NiGHTS. It's got Claris and Elliot in furry costumes you know, and lots of hidden presents to open. I like presents me.

XXX Gus



CYNICAL XMAS-XPLOITATION ISSUE WILL BE OUT 6TH DECEMBER.


UNMATCHED
SEGA
WORLDWIDE SOCCER
97
'THE GAMEPLAY IS JUST ABOUT THE BEST I'VE SEEN IN A FOOTBALL SIM'
SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 94%
'THE BEST 32-BIT FOOTBALL GAME YET'
C&VG 5/5
KICK OFF 17th OCTOBER
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